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# CONTENTS

HEMMINGS CLASSIC CAR • MARCH 2023 • VOLUME 19, ISSUE 6

60

## PERSPECTIVE

6 **Matthew Litwin**

10 **Lost & Found**

14 **Recaps Letters**

18 **David Conwill**

20 **Pat Foster**

22 **Bob Palma**

66 **Reminiscing**

72 **Jim Richardson**

## FEATURES

8 **News Reports**

24 **driveReport:**
**1962 Pontiac Bonneville**

32 **Driveable Dream:**
**1969 Mercury Montego**

48 **Automotive Design:**
**1971-'74 AMC Javelin**

54 **1978 Pontiac Firebird Esprit**

60 **1952 Dodge B-3-B pickup**

spotlight
**pontiacs**

32

## MARKETPLACE

68 **Auction News & Highlights**

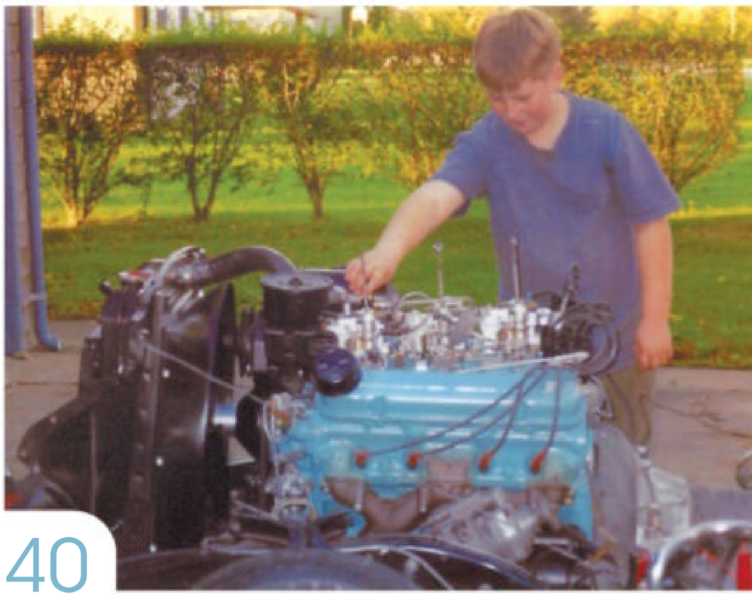
70 **HemmingsAuctions.com**

## TECH

12 **Products & Parts**

40 **Restoration Profile:**
**1957 Pontiac Custom Safari wagon**

48



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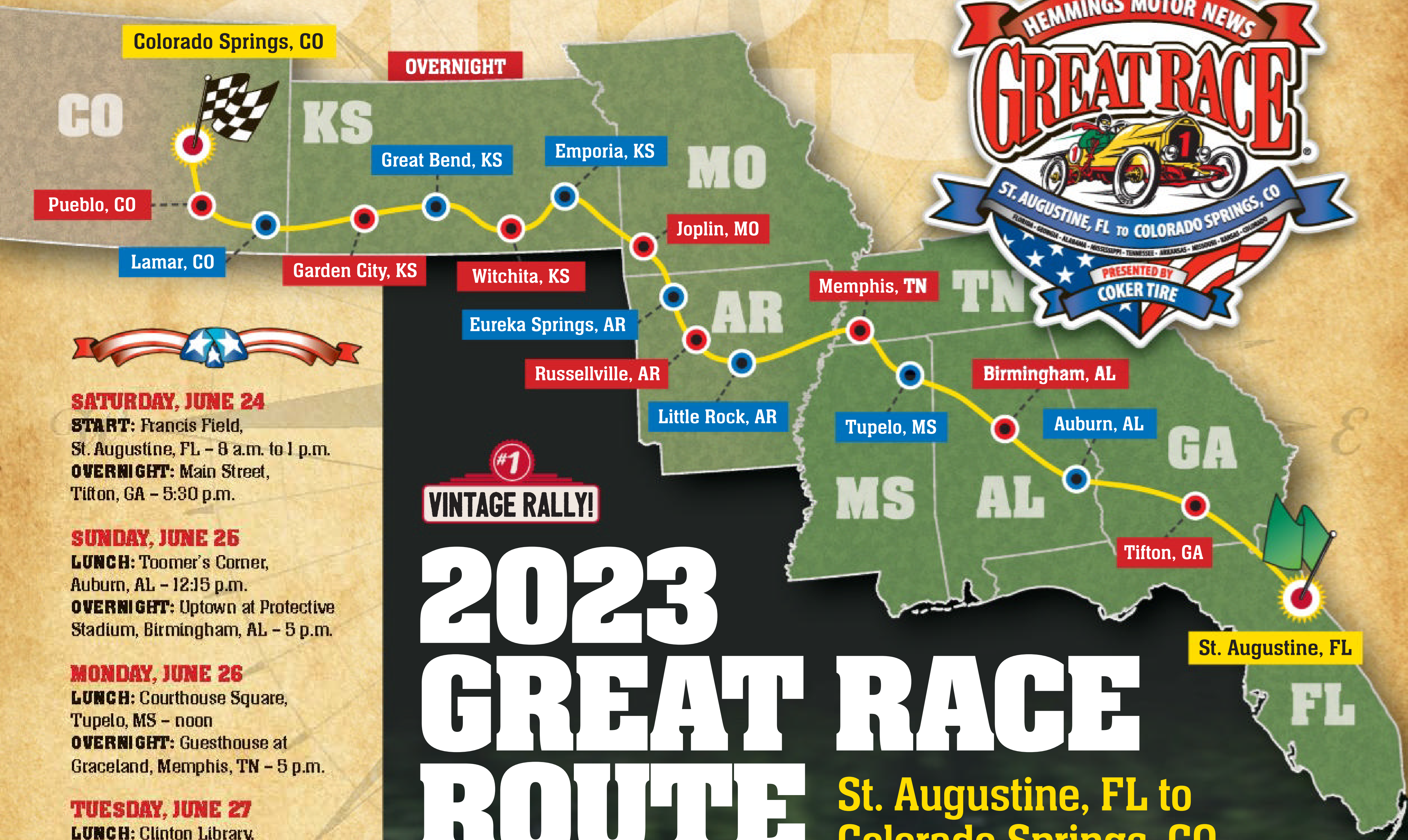
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**START:** Francis Field,
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**OVERNIGHT:** Main Street,
Tifton, GA – 5:30 p.m.

### SUNDAY, JUNE 25

**LUNCH:** Toomer's Corner,
Auburn, AL – 12:15 p.m.
**OVERNIGHT:** Uptown at Protective
Stadium, Birmingham, AL – 5 p.m.

### MONDAY, JUNE 26

**LUNCH:** Courthouse Square,
Tupelo, MS – noon
**OVERNIGHT:** Guesthouse at
Graceland, Memphis, TN – 5 p.m.

### TUESDAY, JUNE 27

**LUNCH:** Clinton Library,
Little Rock, AR – 11:45 a.m.
**OVERNIGHT:** Russellville Depot,
Russellville, AR – 5 p.m.

### WEDNESDAY, JUNE 28

**LUNCH:** Community Center,
Eureka Springs, AR – 12:15 p.m.
**OVERNIGHT:** Main Street downtown,
Joplin, MO – 5 p.m.

### THURSDAY, JUNE 29

**LUNCH:** Commercial Street,
Emporia, KS – noon
**OVERNIGHT:** Old Town,
Wichita, KS – 5 p.m.

### FRIDAY, JUNE 30

**LUNCH::** Courthouse Square,
Great Bend, KS – noon
**OVERNIGHT:** Main Street at Stevens
Park, Garden City, KS – 5 p.m.

### SATURDAY, JULY 1

**LUNCH:** Colorado Welcome Center,
Lamar, CO – 11:45 a.m.
**OVERNIGHT:** Pueblo Union Depot,
Pueblo, CO – 5 p.m.

### SUNDAY, JULY 2

**FINISH:** Tejon Street,
Colorado Springs, CO – 1 p.m.

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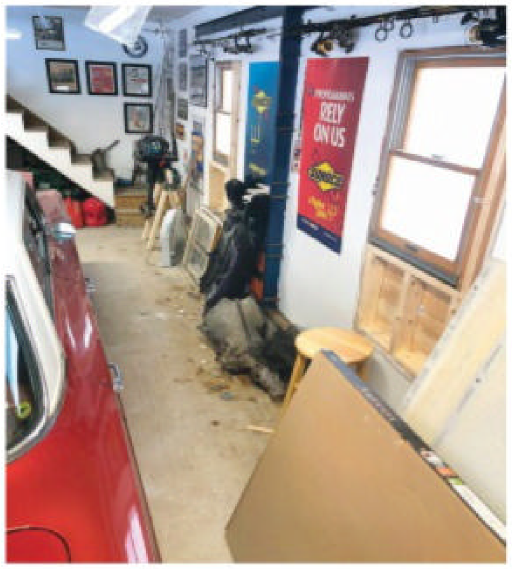
# matthew**litwin**

> "My days of contorting to retrieve something as simple as a torque wrench from the vast pile of clutter are, thankfully, coming to an end."

## Battling the Bulge!

Contrary to what one might think, this has nothing to do with the intense combat armies endured within the Ardennes nearly eight decades ago, or the annual test of willpower against the tasty might of holiday snacks. No, this has to do with the constant struggle to minimize the introduction of—and/or maximize the purge of—more outdated, too-good-to-throw-away, might-need-it-again objects of everyday life to the "Family Storage Center," also known as "the garage."

I'll refrain from narrating every OSHA-violating trip hazard that exists in what was once my well-organized workspace for vintage cars. Oh, the horrors verbally painted in prior monthly "State of the Space" addresses…it makes me shiver like the animated version of Burl Ives in the 1964 holiday classic *Rudolf the Red-Nosed Reindeer.*



Not anymore, though. Spurred by the knowledge that another winter was going to diminish any level of ambition needed to resurrect the 1952 Buick (now nicknamed "Bu-Bu"), my days of contorting to retrieve something as simple as a torque wrench from the vast pile of clutter are, thankfully, coming to an end.

To put it bluntly, the mess in my garage was a *structurally unsound* mess that broke not one, but two of my garage's windows. The temporary window screens I installed after the break to keep bugs and critters out did little to thwart the seasonal sub-zero wind chills from entering while I adjusted the idle screw on a Rochester carburetor, so I bought two brand new, noticeably smaller, replacement windows at an estate sale for a song. Instead of installing them right away, I propped them against a wall—alongside two sets of golf clubs, an automatic transmission (supposedly from a Sixties Pontiac) that landed at my door step, an array of folding tables, a 5-hp outboard motor, three boxes of cedar shakes, two boxes of miscellaneous junk, a pile of leftover prefinished interior trim, a Cornhole set, and eight storage bins labelled "to sell at Hershey." The pile meant that I couldn't access the right side of my car without fully pulling out of the garage. In late summer I rented a 10-yard dumpster, but again the project stalled.

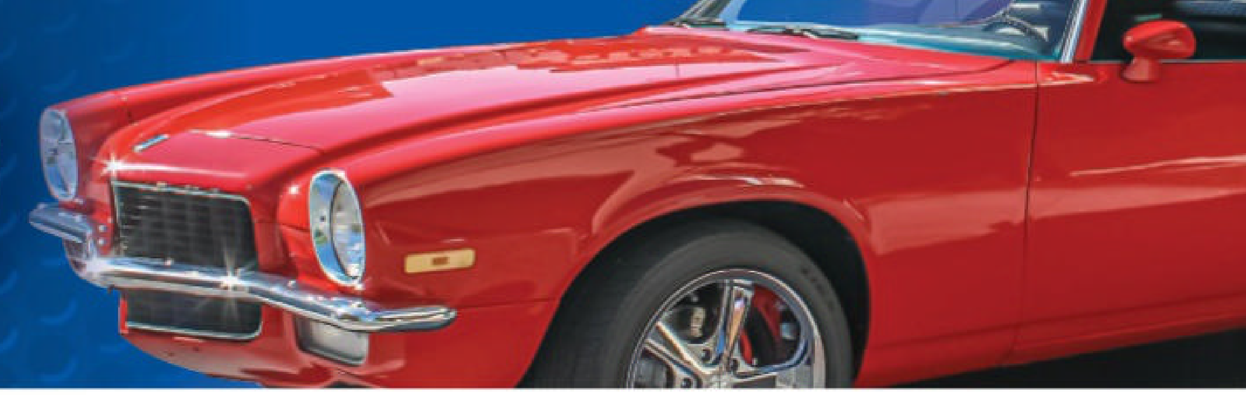
With a light snow falling from the heavens—a long way from late summer—I began to "battle the bulge" in earnest. I armed myself with a stack of 2 x 4 wall studs, two boxes of corrosion-defying screws, and some plywood. I know what you're thinking: More stuff went into the garage. Yes. However, *these* materials were needed to clean up my mess.

As I explained to my ever-supportive wife, I had to clean things up to clean up things. It was, perhaps, a vain attempt to articulate why it took me two afternoons over the weekend to extract a pair of busted windows and frame in what I dubbed new old stock replacements. Of course, that meant the mining and proper filing and/or disposal of nearly everything along the wall, but hey, it was worth it. The feeling of accomplishment—genuine progress for the first time in forever—was only outdone by the noticeable increase in room temperature. There will be no more shivering while I adjust the idle screw on a Rochester carburetor. Best of all, I can see and access the right side of my car without contorting myself. By the way, does anyone want a free GM automatic transmission?

Switching gears, I'm excited at the opportunity to manage this revered title. My career at Hemmings began in April 2006 and, although initially hired as a staff writer and photographer, my portfolio expanded to include key involvement in the Hemmings Motor News Concours d'Elegance and as a member of Hemmings' Great Race team. More recently, I've been assisting Terry McGean with the planning of each *HCC* issue since October 2020—although some may recall that my familiarity with Hemmings and its titles date back to the days of my youth, when I thought the *Sears Christmas Wishbook* merely complemented the treasures to be discovered within the issues of *Hemmings Motor News* my dad received each month.

Car shows were also part of growing up, a tradition that remained when I purchased my first antique car in 1996. When issue #1 of *HCC* was announced for an October 2004 release date, my dad and I both subscribed before making the trek to Hershey, and we added two extensions to those subscriptions during that year's Meet Week. I've been an avid reader of the title since. I'm always captivated by the boundless stories this vast hobby offers, and this magazine will continue to celebrate these stories even as the masthead changes.

**Write to our Editor at mlitwin@hemmings.com and follow him on Instagram @matt.litwin.hemmings.**



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BY TOM COMERRO

# Corvair Preservation Foundation Museum Receives New Recognition

**THOSE OF YOU WHO HAVE MADE** the trek on Route 66 in recent years may have noticed or stopped by a facility dedicated to Chevrolet's famous air-cooled car. General Motors has now officially recognized the Corvair Preservation Foundation Museum in Glenarm, Illinois, as the official Corvair museum in North America. The museum, in operation since 2016, hosts events throughout the year to celebrate and preserve the legacy of the popular compact car.

"It is with great joy and genuine excitement that we announce the official new name of our 'National Corvair Museum,' which has just been approved by General Motors," Mike Hall, CPF President and Museum Curator, says. "We look forward to a long and productive partnership with General Motors as Corvair will now have a national home for its display of historical vehicles, engines, and artifacts, as well as an archive for the history of this air-cooled wonder."

As it stands now, the museum hosts a variety of Corvair cars, trucks, vans, customs, powertrain displays, and other memorabilia. It has also been added to the Route 66 Historic Traveler's Tour Guide. For more about this facility, visit corvairmuseum.com.

## MARCH

**2-5 • The Amelia**
Amelia Island, Florida • 904-636-0027
ameliaislandconcours.org

**5 • Sumter Swap Meet**
Bushnell, Florida • 727-848-7171 • floridaswapmeets.com

**18 • AACA Antique Auto Show**
Vero Beach, Florida • 772-584-1842 • aaca.org

**11-12 • Kyana Auto Swap Meet**
Louisville, Kentucky • 502-619-2917 • kyanaswapmeet.com

**17-18 • Chickasha Pre-War Swap Meet**
Chickasha, Oklahoma • 405-224-9090 • pre-war.com

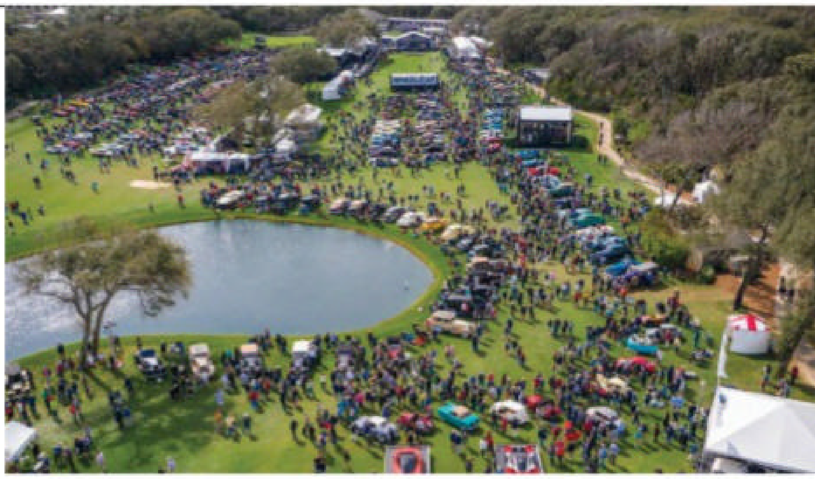
**19-20 • Almost Spring Model A Club Swap Meet**
Puyallup, Washington • 360-863-2877 • mafca.com

**24-25 • Corvette Expo**
Pigeon Forge, Tennessee • 865-687-3976 • corvetteexpo.com

**24-26 • Turkey Run**
Daytona Beach, Florida • 386-767-9070 • turkeyrun.com

*Please note that these events are active as of press time. We recommend you verify the status before making plans to attend.*

# Amelia Island Concours



**THE SCHEDULE FOR THE 28TH AMELIA ISLAND CONCOURS D'ELEGANCE—NOW KNOWN** as The Amelia—has been set with something for everyone over four days. After the opening night Porsche Winemaker's Dinner, the nearby Jacksonville International Airport will host a Porsche Driving Experience for a wild drive with a professional driver, and a seminar about Corvettes at Le Mans at the Ritz-Carlton. Friday's film will be *The Quest*, which sheds light on what became of the four Corvettes after their 1960 race at Le Mans. Saturday's car show will feature more than 500 vehicles spread across RADwood spotlighting 1980s and 1990s vehicles; Concours d'Lemons for oddball, unique, and unimpressive cars; and Cars & Community, spotlighting hundreds of curated cars from around the country. That night will include a seminar with this year's honoree, NASCAR Hall of Famer Jeff Gordon, and a dinner to follow. Finally, on Sunday, the Concours d'Elegance will put more than 250 vehicles up for judging in 32 classes, including the special 120th Anniversary of Buick, Le Mans Winners, and Fiberglass Racing Spyder Porsche classes. The event will take place March 2-5; visit ameliaconcours.com for more details.

# Chrome Glidden Tour Scheduled for Central Texas

**THE VINTAGE MOTOR CAR CLUB OF AMERICA ANNOUNCED THE DATES AND ROUTE FOR ITS 41ST CHROME** Glidden Tour. Enjoy four days of touring and experiencing wildflowers, spirits, history, and old cars in the Texas Hill Country, centered around Fredericksburg, Texas. Preference will be given to vehicles built from 1935-1998, with the tour capped at 100 entries. The itinerary includes drives to Enchanted Rock, the Willow City Loop, the Museum of the Pacific War, country roads to Luckenbach and Johnson City, and a private car collection. The tour will take place April 16-20 and registration is now open. Visit vmcca.org/tours for more details and registration forms.

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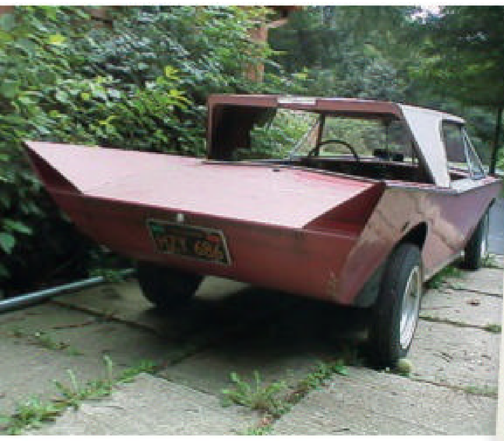
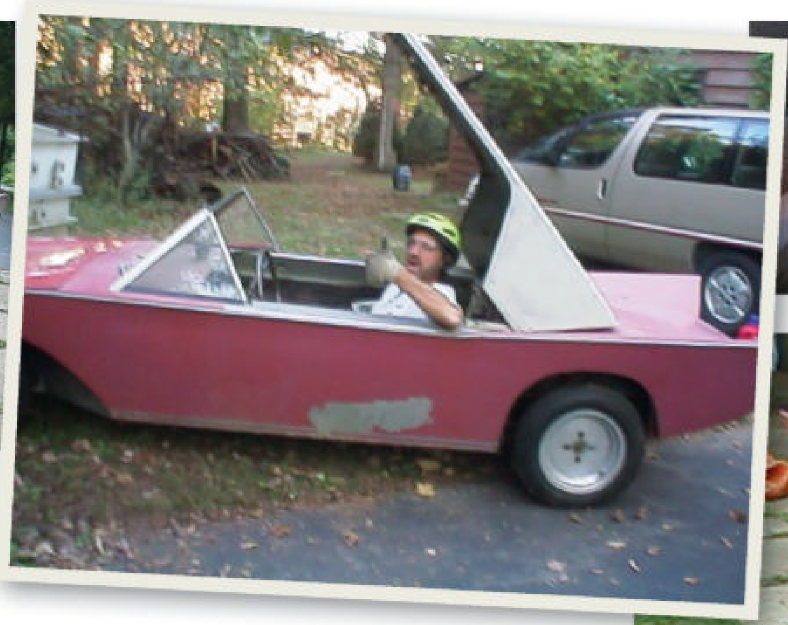
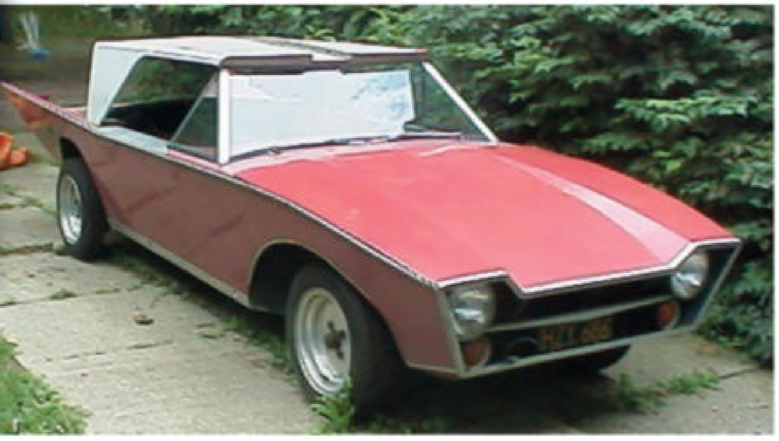
BY DANIEL STROHL







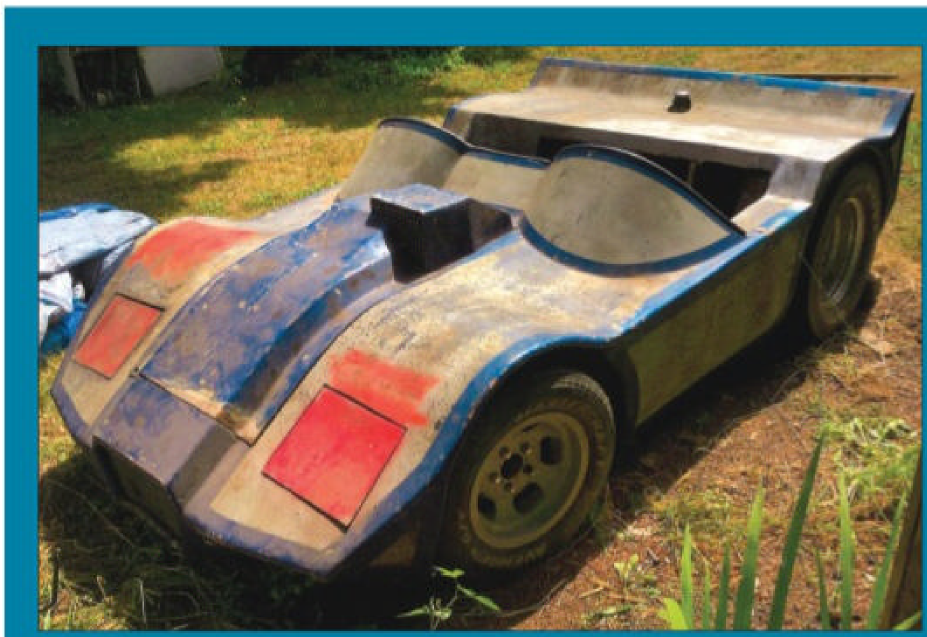
# EV2

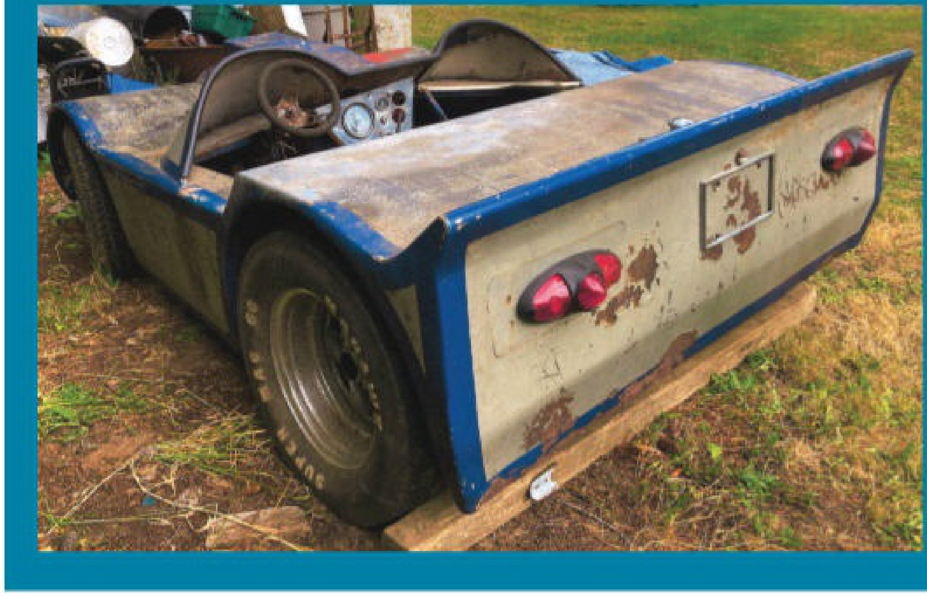
**THE AMOUNT OF INFORMATION THAT CAME WITH THE LITTLE ELECTRIC** sports car when Tom Rapini bought it from a friend's widow was sparse. The amount of useful information was even more scant. In fact, he didn't even really know what to call it, so he's since dubbed it "EV2," denoting the second homebuilt electric car he's come to own.

What he knows for sure: It has an aluminum body, a boat windshield, dual 36-volt golf cart motors with belt-to-chain drive at each rear wheel, and a "clacking" speed control "with contractors that feed the power through a big resistor for the three slower speeds, just like the old golf carts in the Sixties," he says.

What he's been told: A retired aircraft engineer in California built it. It may have a twin somewhere. It has had at least five owners. It has Crosley suspension parts.

It does still have California black plates, last stickered in 1971, and he has been able to get it moving with lithium batteries. Other than that, he's at a loss. Does anybody recognize this angular electric?





## Movie Car?

**SIMILAR TO TOM RAPINI'S PREDICAMENT, BOND HANSON** wrote in about what he's calling the "movie car," an unidentified fiberglass object with no real information about its origins.

"The story is that it was built on the back lot of a movie studio for bit parts in movies," Bond writes. "Some people think that it was in the movie *Death Race 2000*."

According to IMCDB.org, that's a swing and a miss, but it does have a mockup-to-look-good-for-the-cameras vibe to it. On the other hand, Bond notes that it does have a full drivetrain (Hillman Husky four-cylinder and transmission, Ford 9-inch differential, all somehow mounted to a Volkswagen chassis) and was at one point upholstered. It even has instruments, a handbrake, and a reasonably accessible fuel filler, as we see from the pictures.

We're not ruling out that it appeared on celluloid at some point; if it did, let us know from which cinematic masterpiece you recognize it. That said, it could very well have just been somebody's homebuilt project car, in which case we'd like to know whose.

**Recently discovered a unique or noteworthy classic car? Let us know. Photographs, commentary, questions, and answers should be submitted to Lost & Found, c/o *Hemmings Classic Car,* P.O. Box 196, Bennington, Vermont 05201, or emailed to dstrohl@hemmings.com.**

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BY TOM COMERRO

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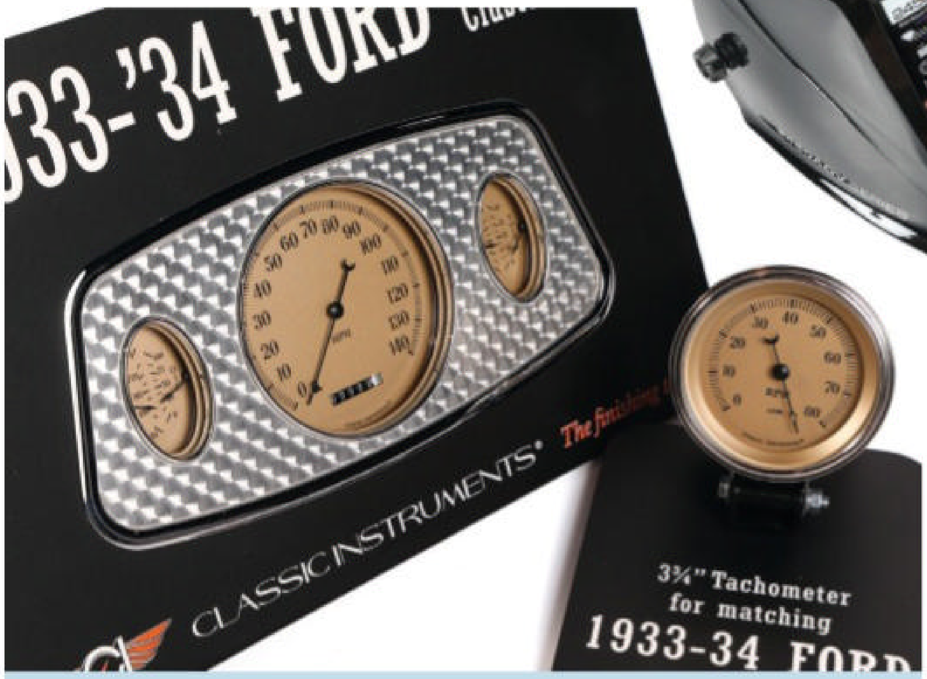

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**YOUR ARTICLE ABOUT THE 1951** Kaiser-Frazer Henry J Deluxe in the December issue (*HCC* #219) reminded me of an incident that occurred when I was a junior in high school. My dad was an owner of a small auto repair shop; he would have me come over after school to clean the parts room, office, and bathroom, and to sweep the garage floor.

One day the phone—which I was never allowed to answer—rang. My dad was working underneath a car, so he finally had me answer it. An elderly woman on the other end of the call said, "Henry is sick." I replied that she had the wrong number, that she had called an auto shop instead of the doctor's office. Of course, my dad asked who had called, and when I told him he immediately went to the phone and called her back. It turned out she was a valued customer and always said "Henry is sick" when she needed automotive assistance—"Henry" was her 1951 Lime Green Henry J. Little did I know.

Robert Brown
*Clearfield, Pennsylvania*

**MARK McCOURT'S ARTICLE "SMART,** Tough, and Thrifty," in the December issue, instantly made us revert to 1953 and the 1,000-mile-long Mexican road race (the Carrera Panamericana), an event in which the little Henry J went all the way. We all seem to recall the West Coast shipyard of Henry J. Kaiser and his monumental contribution to our Naval vessels in World War II.

Ultimately, Kaiser endeavored, post-war, to build three car brands: Kaiser, Frazer, and the Henry J. In fact, the latter was available in with a four- or a six-cylinder engine.

We recall two women were driving their four-cylinder Henry J on a hilly dirt road and encountered difficulty reaching the summit. Undeterred, one got out of the car and proceeded to lend a helping hand by pushing; never to be denied, their enterprising efforts worked, and they scaled the hill. Back then, people were exalted for their perseverance.

Over the years, we've lost notable marque brands.

Alan & Frank Pfau
*Advance, North Carolina*

**I JUST FINISHED RE-READING THE** December issue for the third time. Typically, I read the columns the first time through, and then the articles and ads as the month goes on. One article I just had to re-read was the "Driveable Dream" on the 1935 Studebaker Dictator. First, I usually don't have to resort to a dictionary as I read, but David Conwill's use of "paucity" and "greige" caused me to pause. Thank you. It is great to read an article about a "driver," not a restored garage queen that only sees daylight on the way to a show.

I have a 1939 Ford Fordor with a fairly stock exterior and interior. Since taking ownership, I've rubbed the body out and replaced the rubber floormat. My work has been limited to the mechanical systems on the flathead V-8, as well as the radiator, brakes, 12-volt (for lights) system, fuel tank, carburetor, and wiring. Until an engine fire, I drove the car several times a week. Now it is laid up for most of what passes for winter in Northern California while I rebuild and rewire. Thank you again for the interesting stories.

Bruce Lagomarsino
*Elk Grove, California*

**LIKE PAUL DUTTON—OWNER OF THE** 1966 Studebaker Daytona Sport Sedan featured in your January issue (*HCC* #220)—I have always had an eye for Studebaker. When I was a young boy in the Seventies, my uncle Marv was president of a Studebaker club in New Jersey. He had over 40 Studebakers stashed in barns and family garages all over the state. My family had a late-Fifties wagon in our

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STUDEBAKER

garage for years. We also had a couple of Hawks and a Golden Hawk in the garage for short periods. As years passed, my Uncle Marv got into Avantis — only original Studebaker Avantis. He sold off his massive collection just to focus on that model; he purchased several 1964 examples. Finally, he found his prize: A low-number, black, super-charged model. If I remember correctly this car was a single digit manufacturing number. He was in his glory. Thanks for conjuring such memories of a mostly forgotten American classic.
Jeff Johnson
*via email*

**MY DAD WAS A TRUE-BLUE "CHEVY** man," so there were no Studebakers in my youth. I was introduced to the brand in 1968 when I acquired my first car: a 1962 Lark with some miles on it. It had a basic straight-six engine, three-on-the-tree transmission, and a faded green paint job. I used it to commute to college in New Haven, Connecticut, from my little hometown of Killingworth some 20 miles away. My younger sister's friends thought it was a special kind of cool. It was christened the "Dude-Baker," as well as the "Nashville Cats Car" for some reason related to rock and roll. The Lark came to a tragic end about a year later when a behemoth Chrysler rear-ended it at a stop light in the city. Nobody but the car was hurt, but that was goodbye to the old Studie. As it was my first car, it holds a special place in my heart. I still love Studebakers but lack the resources to own a classic one like the beauty in your January issue. It's a gorgeous car in unbelievable condition. Congrats to the lucky owner of such a classic!
Alfred Somerville
*via email*

**I WAS RE-READING TERRY McGEAN'S** column in the March issue (*HCC* #210) in which he asked if that classic American luxury motoring experience can be obtained in a newer car. I say maybe in a Rolls, but the last American-made luxury car was the Lincoln Town Car, especially the long-wheelbase version. There are no other true luxury cars being made today, as a rough-riding compact with bad road noise, a cramped interior, and hard seats is not a luxury car. An old Model T has those same characteristics. Sad that the long-wheelbase version of the last Lincoln Town Cars experienced almost zero sales, except to livery services.
Michael J. Benardo
*Vallejo, California*

**I CAN RELATE TO MUCH OF WHAT** Terry McGean stated in his column ("Restoration Education," *HCC* #220). My first adventure with a motor vehicle was mostly limited by lack of knowledge and lack of money. I had to learn hands on; in fact, there is no better way. From carburetion, to brakes, to engines, to suspension repairs, I had to learn by doing. Early on, my neighbor (who was two years older) had two books written by Ray F. Kuns, one on drivetrains, and one on suspension and steering design. These were old — probably from the 1930s — but very helpful. We learned to fix and adjust lots of things, including bearing clearances, timing, the carburetor, etc., without any instruments, and with minimal tools. By the time I gave up my home shop in 2006, I had acquired a remarkable array of special tools, (some were even homemade), and about 56 years of experience! What fun I had, but then again, those vehicles of the '20s, '30s, '40s, and '50s were easy to work on. Even the cars of the 60s were similar, but things then began to get more complicated, and so did the equipment.

I enjoyed the article on the 1956 Dodge La Femme, which I remembered from when it was introduced. I have always thought the '55 and '56 Dodge Royals were the best-looking Chrysler Corporation products of the '50s, much better than the high-finned 1957-'60 models. Anyway, the La Femme was a lovely car, and was probably an idea worth trying.

One last comment: I wish the MIG welder had been around when I first started working on cars. I never really mastered electric welding or brazing, although I tried my hand at it.
Pat Jacobs
*Redmond, Washington*

**AS A BIG FAN OF THE DOMESTIC** cars and trucks of the 1970's, I have been delighted to read feature stories of 1970s vehicles in recent editions of *Hemmings Classic Car*. Since October 2022 alone, the editions have highlighted the 1973-'75 Chevy Caprice, the '78 Pontiac Firebird Sky Bird, the '75 Dodge 100 Adventurer truck, the '72 Pontiac Le Mans sedan, the '78-'81 Chevy Camaro, and the '78 Ford Thunderbird. In none of these articles were the words, "land yachts," "malaise era," "boats," "behemoths," or "smog choked" used. It was so refreshing to finally read articles that show an appreciation for these cars rather than the old, tired, group-think derogatory comments from auto writers who were probably not even alive or of driving age in the 1970s. The horsepower wars may have been on hiatus during the decade, but for millions of us on the road at that time big horsepower was not all that important.

In the December issue, author Jeff Koch said this of the second generation (1978-1981) Camaro, of which 829,000 were produced: "Winnow out the hot Z28 models and you're looking at just over 600,000 plebian-yet-popular Camaros that people bought as clean, sharp, attractive, nice-driving, smooth-riding, ordinary daily-driven cars — cars that could coddle as well as give a majestic feel behind that long hood." Amen, Jeff!

In the 1970s, our house always had two or three cars in the driveway. We owned cars from across the spectrum of make and model. However, our all-time favorites were a base 4WD 1973 GMC Jimmy (Blazer) and a '78 Lincoln Town Car sedan.

The '73 Jimmy was our main hunting, fishing, and dog-carrying vehicle. It had the venerable 307-cu.in. V-8, a rubber floormat, no A/C, and a column-mounted three-speed manual transmission. It easily traversed the deep snows of our western Pennsylvania winters and made child's play of thick mud, rutted logging roads, fields, and obstacles. It also carried loads of heavy gear on our big fishing trips to the far northern areas of Canada. That rugged, wonderful vehicle never failed us

*Continued on page 16*

Continued from page 15

over thousands and thousands of miles of hard use and it never required a major repair of any type during our many years of ownership.

Our 1978 Lincoln Town Car was the family's highway cruiser. There was none better. The big 460-cu.in. V-8 pulled hard, and the plush cabin was completely silent and extremely comfortable. Even after long road trips we were not a bit tired. The heavy Lincoln coddled us in safety and luxury and isolated us from nasty weather and rough roads all while its Quadraphonic 8-track wafted out the latest tunes. Yes, it only got about 13 mpg on the highway, but we didn't care. We knew we were riding in a very special vehicle and gladly accepted the trade-off of a few extra dollars for gas. The Lincoln, too, never required any sort of major repair. It was an extremely robust and reliable vehicle, and we loved it.

In fact, not one of the vehicles at our house during that entire decade ever failed us or suffered any type of significant mechanical or electrical issue. We religiously performed regular maintenance, washed them, and coated them with hard paste wax. In return, they rewarded us with reliability, dependability, and comfort.

In summary, many of the cars and trucks of the 1970s were fine vehicles. They got the job done well for millions of Americans and their families. Like me, there are multitudes out there who have a deep respect and a great fondness for them. So please keep those articles on the cars and trucks of the 1970s coming.

John Perry
*Edgewater, Maryland*

**I HAVE JUST FINISHED READING** David Conwill's article on Anthony Cicero's 1978 Ford Thunderbird on page 28 of the January issue (*HCC* #220). It brought back fond memories of my youth. Back when it was new, I had the pleasure of owning and driving a 1977 Thunderbird, which was finished in Emerald Green with a white split vinyl top and side molding, and a matching Emerald Green Luxury Decor interior. Mine had the optional 400-2V engine. The car had the smoothest of rides at any speed (legal or otherwise). Those cars had an interesting feature (according to the dealer) that allowed a slight rearward travel of the front suspension upon encountering imperfections in the road, supposedly to absorb any vibration. I don't know whether it actually worked, but the ride was smooth nonetheless!

As in most cases, the family came, and the car went. Now that I'm older and the family has gone off to make their own memories, I may now have my "new" 1956 Thunderbird. It doesn't ride like the 1977, but that doesn't matter when the top goes down!

I so look forward to each month's issue and all the articles. Thanks to you all for such a well-published magazine.

Tim Sessions
*Ferriday, Louisiana*

**I ENJOYED THE ARTICLE, "RETURN** of the Broughams?" in your January edition, which dealt with the restoration of a 1978 Ford Thunderbird. I was always a big fan of Thunderbirds and my father bought three of them in the Sixties. After that they became too large and too expensive. In 1977, I bought one of the new, downsized T-Birds like the one in your article.

I must say I was a little disappointed in my first T-Bird (I bought two more in the late Eighties). I traded in a 1974 Mercury Cougar XR-7 as part of the deal and discovered my new T-Bird was almost the same vehicle. When I had bought the Cougar, the salesman made a big deal about the "steel-belted radial tires," and he was right. It handled really well; better, in fact, than my 1969 Ford Mustang that I used prior. The T-Bird must have had cheaper tires because it was no better on the road than the almost four-year-old Cougar.

The hideaway headlamps that looked so good on the T-Bird were all well and good, but in a northern climate such as ours we had freezing rain, snow, and ice to contend with, and on one occasion one of the headlamp doors froze shut. When it did finally open, it split in half and the door was broken beyond repair. In addition, one of the wheel covers flew off and was never seen again. I was driving around in a T-Bird with a broken headlight cover and a missing wheel cover. Not a good look.

James A. McAllister
*Ajax, Ontario, Canada*

**THE REPORT ON THE 1978 FORD** Thunderbird reminded me of my late father-in-law Gail Williams' yes, it's a man's name, too) car. He had always fancied T-Birds, and in middle age he finally bought a new one, a green '78. He brought my mother-in-law to visit us in Cincinnati, and casually mentioned at the table that he'd like to get it washed while in town. I was trying to think of the nearest automated wash when my wife whispered in my ear, "I think he means the Stewart's (our family name) Car Wash."

Taking the hint, I assembled a bucket, sponges, hose, etc., and approached the full-size "personal luxury" car in our driveway. The T-Bird had an unbelievable number of edges, ridges, corners, seams, bezels, covers, and ornaments; I think it took me more than an hour to wash and dry it. When I shuffled back inside, Gail remarked, "Yes, that's a mighty hard car to wash!" Gail has since passed away, the car is gone, my family unit has dissolved, and even that house and driveway have been bulldozed for a freeway, but the memory of that '78 Thunderbird abides. Thank you, Gail, and thank you, *HCC*.

Mark Stewart
*Cincinnati, Ohio*

**To have your letter considered for Recaps, you must include your full name and the town/city and state you live in. Thank you.**

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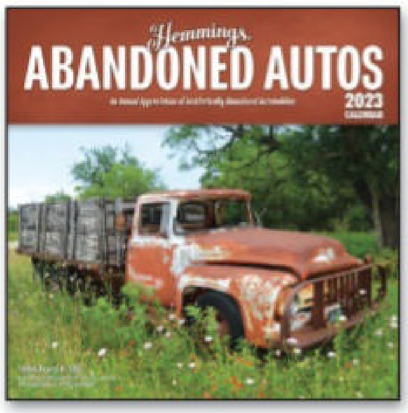
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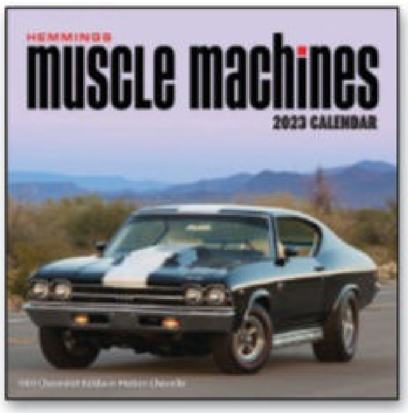
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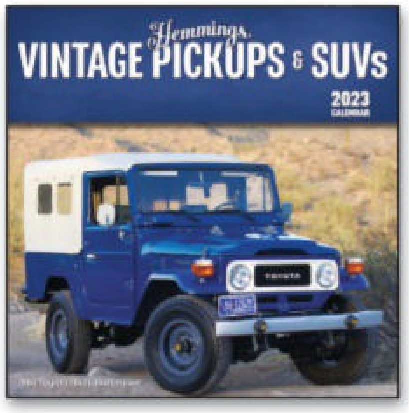
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**davidconwill**

> "Carburetors don't play well with modern emissions standards, but from a user standpoint, they're simplicity itself."

# Forties Tech is Best Tech

My daily driver is a '62 Corvair, but if I could have another, it would most certainly be something from the late 1930s or early 1940s. More specifically, it might be a 1929-'31 Ford Model A upgraded to the technological moment of 1940-'48. Then, just straddling the U.S. participation in World War II, a lot of technological trends of the 1920s culminated into a pinnacle of the Machine Age. Modern consumer goods, automobiles included, may be more capable than their equivalents of the 1940s, but the vintage pieces are unmatched for serviceability, durability, and user friendliness.

In the automotive sense, I can think of a few pieces of technology that were standard in U.S. automobiles in 1940 that were never really improved upon.

## The Downdraft Carburetor

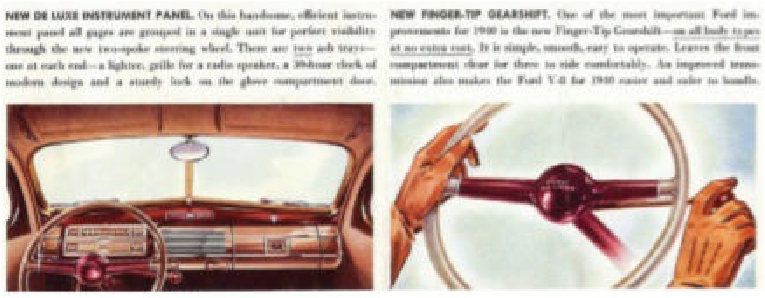
Up to 1932, virtually every automobile used some form of updraft or sidedraft carburetor. These were largely fine from a user standpoint and even had the advantages of packaging, gravity-feed fuel, and almost never flooded the engine, but they were a major airflow restriction. Chrysler introduced the downdraft carburetor in 1929 and the industry soon followed.

Carburetors don't play well with modern emissions standards, but from a user standpoint, they're simplicity itself, requiring nothing more than a vacuum gauge to achieve near-peak tuning. The truly detail-obsessed can use a wide-band O2 sensor to really get things dialed in, it's just a matter of turning wrenches and screwdrivers instead of inputting computer code.

## The Sealed-Beam Headlamp

When it comes to headlights or headlamps—regardless of what you call them—the seven-inch sealed beam, even in six-volt 1940, was perhaps the perfect lighting solution for 90-percent of American drivers. I suspect anyone who has driven at night in the past month likely knows how out-of-hand the modern lighting situation has become. We're glad you can see the road, folks, but the rest of us would like to as well.

It happens that 1940 was the model year in which the sealed-beam headlamp became standard on automobiles. Later in the 1950s, smaller versions for quad applications became legal, and still later a rectangular version was the standard. Whatever today's standard is makes you yearn for the day when auxiliary lighting was just for occasional use. Just buy a spotlight, people. It's what they did in 1940.



**NEW DE LUXE INSTRUMENT PANEL.** On this handsome, efficient instrument panel all gages are grouped in a single unit for perfect visibility through the new two-spoke steering wheel. There are two ash trays—one at each end—a lighter, grille for a radio speaker, a 30-hour clock of modern design and a sturdy lock on the glove compartment door.

**NEW FINGER-TIP GEARSHIFT.** One of the most important Ford improvements for 1940 is the new Finger-Tip Gearshift—on all body types at no extra cost. It is simple, smooth, easy to operate. Leaves the front compartment clear for three to ride comfortably. An improved transmission also makes the Ford V-8 for 1940 easier and safer to handle.

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## Plastic

Plastic is ubiquitous now but was so novel in the 1930s they made jewelry from it. When car manufacturers used it, it wasn't so much because it was cheap and easy, but because it lent their product beauty. When it was used somewhere out of sight, it was because it was necessary. In both cases, it wasn't the oily or brittle plastic of today—it was probably phenolic resin. If it wasn't that, it was probably made from soybeans.

Phenolics, of which the most famous are Bakelite and Catalin, were the first plastics after the highly flammable celluloid. Bakelite was created in 1909 and Catalin came out in 1926. Although their star status has faded, phenolics are still incredibly useful—look under some hoods the next car show you're at and see if you can spot some carburetor spacers made from the stuff. It's an excellent insulator.

## Transmission

The basic three-speed, H-pattern transmission, in floor- or column-shift variety is essentially perfect for its task, with a low gear for starting from a dead stop, an intermediate gear for acceleration, and a direct gear for cruising.

Given a reasonable amount of power and an equally reasonable rear-axle ratio, a basic three-speed will do everything you ask of it, even on modern roads. If you're a speed or acceleration freak, the era's various solutions to overdrive are quite attractive as well. Overdrive typically came along with a lower rear-end gear, giving better acceleration and the same cruising speeds. It was the performance-buff's transmission of choice until the four-speed displaced it in the early '60s.

Finally, there must be an honorable mention to the original automatic transmission, the Hydra-Matic, which was available in the 1940 Oldsmobile. The Hydra was no slush box, it didn't even have a torque convertor, and became renowned for its robust nature. Like most things in the era, it's heavy, overbuilt, and probably a smidge less efficient, but it's also intended to be rebuilt over and over again—not scrapped at 250,000 miles.

The cars of 1940 were really a benchmark.

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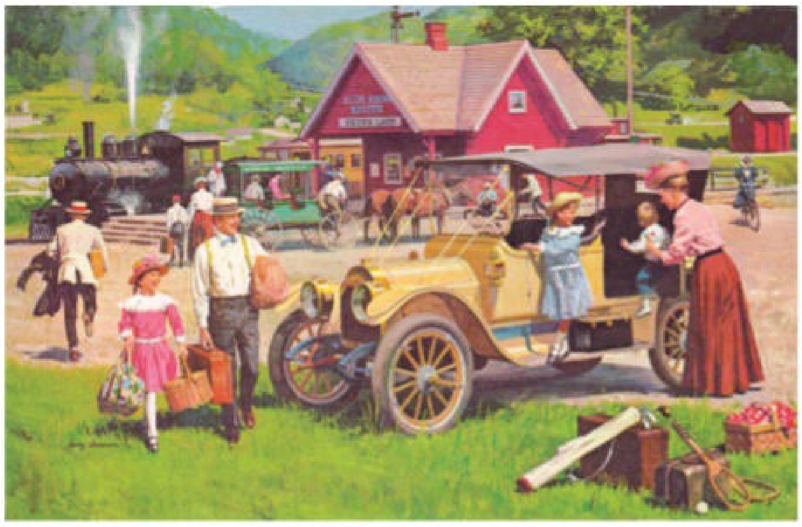
# The Apperson Jackrabbit

The folks who named the little Pennsylvania town of Intercourse weren't trying to come up with a way to make demure ladies blush. Instead, they were thinking of the word's primary meaning—communication or dealing between people, i.e. social intercourse. They wanted the town to be known as a progressive, friendly place. Unfortunately, language changes over the years, and now the word has a different meaning to most people. The same thing happened to Apperson and their famous car.



I don't think Elmer and Edgar Apperson have ever received the recognition they deserve. The two brothers, along with Elwood Haynes, formed the Haynes-Apperson Company in Kokomo, Indiana, becoming that state's first automobile company. From 1896 to 1905 they manufactured Haynes-Apperson cars in small-but-increasing numbers.

Due to a fall-out between the Appersons and Haynes, Elmer and Edgar left the firm in 1901 to set up their own business, called the Apperson Brothers Automobile Company, also based in Kokomo. It's believed that they initially powered their cars with the same flat twin engine used in the Haynes-Apperson, but for 1903 also offered a more powerful vertical four-cylinder. By the end of 1904 they offered four distinct automobile models, all powered by the four-banger.

These cars carried simple names: Model A, Model B, and Model C, as was the custom back then. But in 1907 the Apperson boys introduced a sporty new car with a name that today sounds so hilarious, one wonders why they used it. Back then, the Jack Rabbit (later spelled Jackrabbit) drew instant respect. It was what today would be called a sports car, a low-slung two-seater with a round fuel tank mounted just behind the driver's seat, flared front fenders, wood-spoke wheels, and under a hood held down by leather straps, a jacked-up four cylinder engine good for 60 hp (versus 30-55 in other Apperson models). It might also be called one of the first muscle cars, because it was fitted with basically the same engine designed for their big limousine. Moreover, with greater horsepower and a lot less weight—the classic muscle car formula—the new Apperson roadster could take off like, well, a jackrabbit, and offered a guaranteed top speed of 75 mph, at a time when Henry Ford's Model S could do about 40 mph. Of course, that's not a fair comparison unless we mention that the Jackrabbit's $5,000 price tag was more than six times the $750 price Henry charged for a Model S roadster. As always, performance costs more money.

You might be thinking that 75 mph doesn't sound like a very high speed, but try doing 75 mph in a wide-open roadster with no seat belts or shoulder harness, riding on skinny tires at a time when blow-outs were very common, and knowing that the only thing to stop you are brakes on the rear wheels. Keep in mind that you've also got a big tank full of gasoline about five inches from your back. Doing 75 mph in a Jackrabbit must have been exhilarating—and terrifying.

Americans have always loved fast cars, and the new Jackrabbit proved popular despite its high price. Apperson soon earned a reputation for superior performance. By 1911 the entire range—all tourers—carried the Jackrabbit badge. In 1916 the firm introduced a V-8 engine, but it had stopped using the Jackrabbit name by then.

Appersons were expensive from the start, though in 1912 the company began to offer lower-priced models. The automaker needed more sales volume, and common sense dictated lower prices to drive dealership traffic. It worked, but not by much. Unit sales of cars, usually in the 500-800 cars annual range, edged up to 1,700-1,800 cars per year. Profit-wise that was nowhere near enough. Management tried everything they could think of to ignite vehicle sales, but nothing worked. Perhaps the performance image was too tied to high prices, so that potential buyers were scared off before they ever entered an Apperson showroom—one hundred years later, it's difficult to tell. Sales began to droop and by 1925 the company called it quits. That's a shame—the Apperson automobiles were good cars and deserved a better fate. Alas, the auto industry is remorseless, and better cars have also died along with them.

> "Doing 75 mph in a Jackrabbit must have been exhilarating—and terrifying."

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"Did you know she was a life-long Studebaker customer?"

# "Aunt Bee's" Last Studebaker

Have you ever met anyone who didn't like *The Andy Griffith Show*? If so, did they seek counsel and treatment for their affliction? It would be warranted.

The show aired from October 1960 through April 1968, a span of almost eight years that encompassed 249 half-hour episodes of life in the fictitious small town of Mayberry, North Carolina, loosely based on Andy Griffith's Mt. Airy, North Carolina, hometown. Andy Griffith played the role of widowed Sheriff Andy Taylor, assisted by his bumbling but well-intentioned deputy, Barney Fife, played by Don Knotts. Andy and his son Opie (played by a young Ron Howard) lived with Andy's Aunt Bee, played by actress Frances Bavier.

And speaking of Ms. Bavier, did you know she was a life-long Studebaker customer? She was!

Ms. Bavier passed away December 6, 1989 at her home in Siler City, North Carolina. At the time of her death, she still owned the last new Studebaker she ever bought, a 1966 Studebaker Daytona two-door Sports Sedan. Although it had deteriorated somewhat from not being driven as they both aged, the car exists today, having been purchased from her estate in 1990 by a Studebaker enthusiast.

"Aunt Bee's" 1966 Studebaker was a six-cylinder Daytona, identified as model 66S-F8 on this Retail Sale Card from The Studebaker National Museum. Before the 1981 model year standardized 17-digit Vehicle Identification Numbers (VINs), vehicles had simple Serial Numbers. Note that Ms. Bavier's car carried Serial Number C131698.

The car's Production Order indicates it was Algonquin Green with a black vinyl top, the same color combination as the 1966 Daytona Sports Sedan featured in the 1966 Studebaker full-line brochure. Her Daytona, however, had a black vinyl bucket seat interior, rather than the white vinyl interior in the brochure car.

Ms. Bavier's 1966 Daytona was built on October 18, 1965, but records indicate it remained unsold and in stock at Johnson Motor Sales in Santa Barbara, California, when Studebaker discontinued automobile production on March 17, 1966. (South Bend, Indiana, Studebaker production ended on December 31, 1963. The remaining production of model year 1964 automobiles and all 1965 and 1966 Studebakers were assembled in Hamilton, Ontario, Canada.)

The Retail Sale Card indicates she bought the car from the largest Studebaker dealer on the west coast, Frost & French in Los Angeles. Unsubstantiated rumor has it that Frost & French went up and down the west coast buying leftover new Studebakers from smaller, marginal dealers after production ceased in Hamilton. The principals at Frost & French (including then-owner W. L. Bibens, who sold Ms. Bavier her Daytona) must have thought they had a good customer base who would want to buy one last new Studebaker now that passenger vehicle production was truly coming to an end.

Frances Bavier was one of those customers. She didn't buy her Daytona until June 14, 1966, almost three months after the last Studebaker had been built. It is known that she was driving a 1962 Studebaker Lark at the time, so she may have wanted to replace it, although she apparently did not trade it in.

Regardless, she knew Studebaker was out of business. In fact, in a November 6, 1972, letter to a Studebaker Drivers Club member in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, she testified, "I've driven Studebakers for 40 years—all kinds, all models—and no other car. Watching the pictures of the closing of the factory, I did indeed weep!"

Ms. Bavier, as Aunt Bee, may be seen driving her 1966 Studebaker Daytona in at least one *Mayberry R.F.D.* episode, the show that continued the Mayberry theme after *The Andy Griffith Show* ceased production. The episode entitled "The Mynah Bird" has extensive footage of her in the car… and since it is in color, the car's hues are apparent.

Frances Bavier's gravestone reads, "To live in the hearts of those left behind is not to die." Those are good thoughts for today. Regarding "Aunt Bee's" preferred automobiles, as the late Paul Harvey would say, "Now you know the rest of the story."

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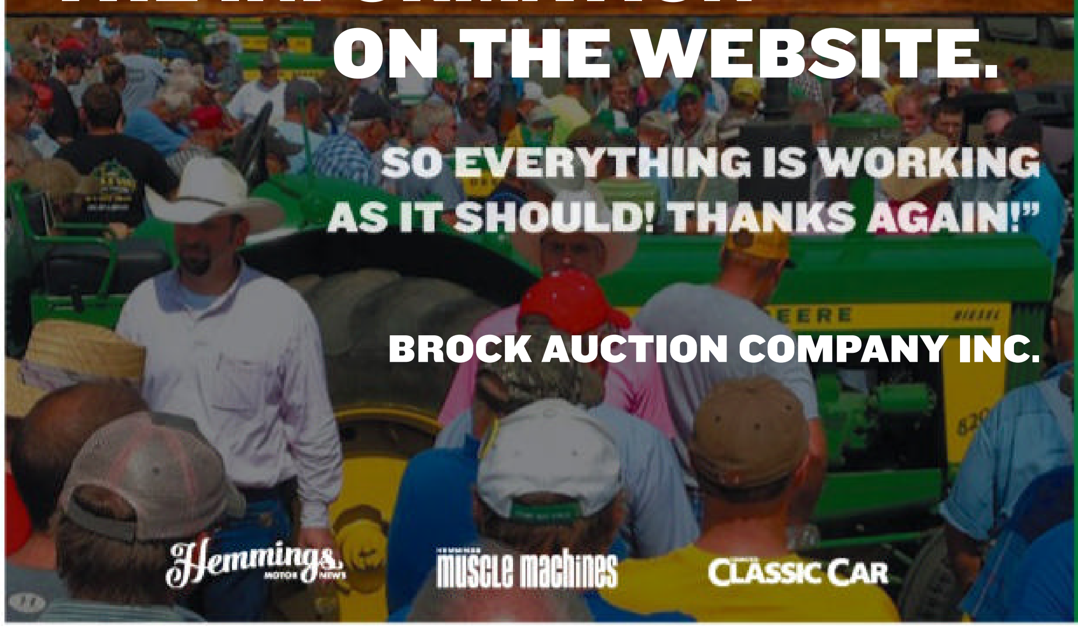

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# Bonneville Transatlantica

*What's it like to drive a full-size 1962 Pontiac…in Italy?*

**BY DAVID CONWILL** • PHOTOGRAPHY BY SCOTT LACHENAUER

This was almost the story of a 1962 Chrysler. Sometime in late 1961 or early '62, Anthony Griffo's father, Giuseppe—"Joe" in this country—was working as a mechanic at Johnny's County Motors in Oaklyn, New Jersey. The base price for this Bonneville back then was $3,349, a hair more than the $3,323 Chrysler 300. Now, granted, the 300 was not a 300-H, nor even a New Yorker—it was more or less a

BONNEVILLE
New Jersey
Q
Q
POPS62
HISTORIC

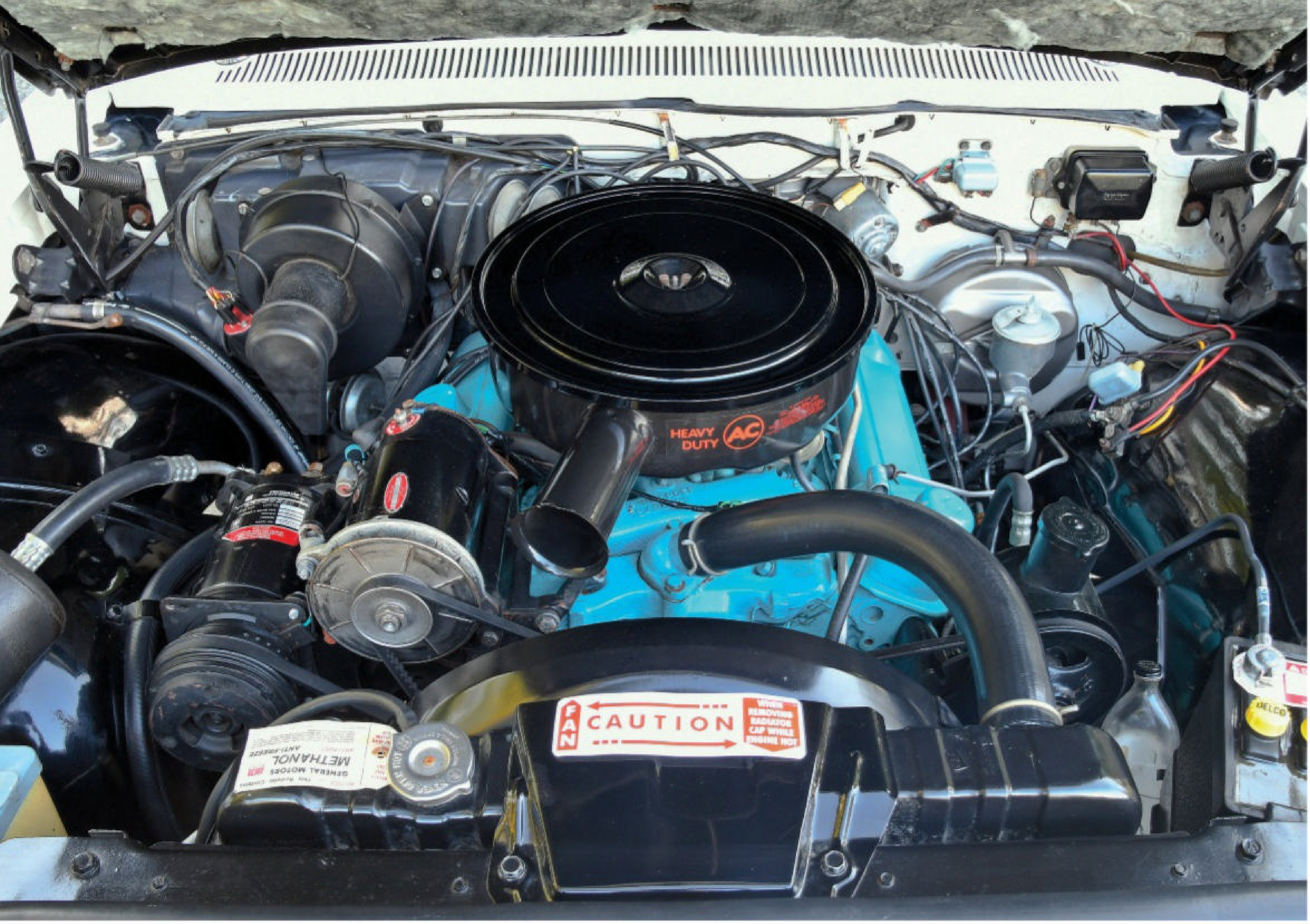
Chryslerized version of the discontinued De Soto Adventurer—but neither is a Bonneville a Grand Prix. Both are still nice, powerful, luxurious mid-priced cars.

The trouble was that Joe's boss didn't think he could swing the payments on a 300 hardtop, and Joe thought he could.

"My father really wanted to buy a new Chrysler," Anthony says. "Every day, he would try to talk to the owner of the dealership, and every day he would get the same response: 'Go away kid, you don't make enough money to buy a car and I am busy selling new cars. I don't have the time to bother with you.'"

In the end, Joe compromised and went to Ted Rapp Pontiac in Palmyra, New Jersey, where they had two Bonneville Sports Coupes on the lot: a black one and this Cameo Ivory car. Joe thought the maroon tri-tone interior in this Bonneville was an especially nice combination and found its price (a couple hundred dollars under that of the black car) attractive too—apparently a quirk of the car having been built with air conditioning despite not having been ordered that way.

Anthony's father then proceeded to drive the car until 1984. During all that time, the car made some history of its own. Joe's



**Joe originally parked his '62 because a couple of cylinders on the 389 had gotten weak and the transmission was starting to slip. Both have since been rebuilt.**

PONTIAC MOTOR DIVISION

reputation as a "go-to" mechanic spread, so he had plenty of paying work during his off hours, as well. The well-kept Pontiac no doubt served as a perfect calling card in addition to reliable, comfortable transportation to his dealership work, which shifted from Johnny's County Motors to Worth Chevrolet in Camden, New Jersey, at the beginning of 1963. It was also in '63 that Anthony's parents married—using the Bonneville as their wedding limousine.

While Joe would stay with Worth through its closure in 1984, in '67, two years before Anthony's birth, Joe took his young family back to Italy, to explore economic opportunities there. The Bonneville came along with them, and the big, American car made a tremendous splash in the Italian countryside.

"My father picked it up in Venice. He was driving down the highway and got pulled over by the Italian police: They had never seen a car this big on the Italian roads."

Despite his international driver's license, and other preparations for operating a car in Italy, Joe could not shake the officer's insistence that the car was too big to safely drive there. Ultimately, he was able to assuage the public servant with the judicious application of three packs of Winston cigarettes he had conveniently stored in the glove box of the Bonneville. In the end, however, the policeman's objections proved not unfounded.

"My father went on his way to Calabria to visit his parents, then to his mother's side in Sicily. They put the car on the ferry, but then it wouldn't fit on the side streets of Sicily, so they couldn't take it anywhere!"

BONNEVILLE

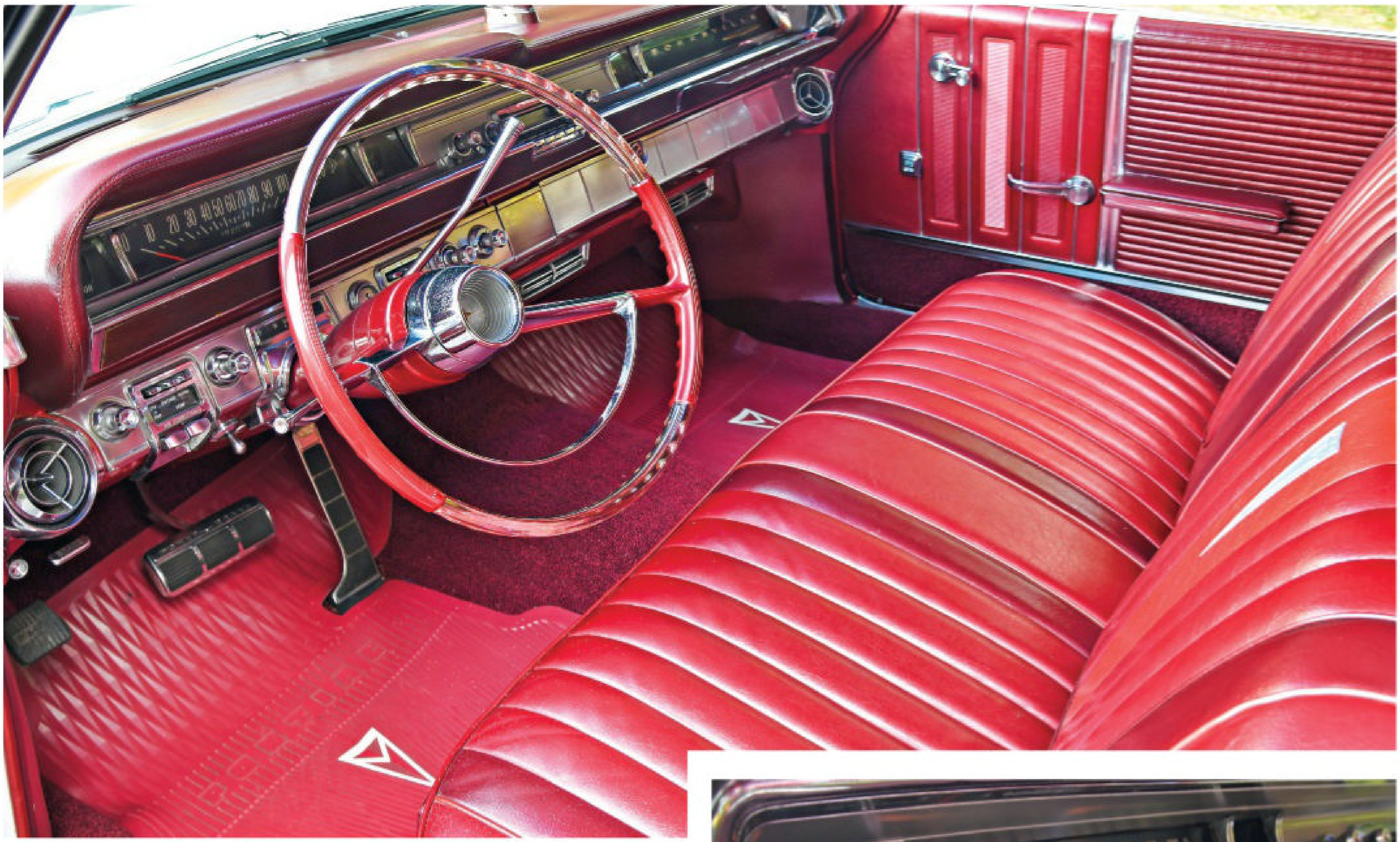
After nine months in Italy without discovering the right employment opportunity, the Griffos and the Bonneville returned home to New Jersey. Finally, the Bonneville was taken off the road when Joe noticed two cylinders had gone weak and the transmission was starting to slip. Feeling that the car deserved a total going over, but too busy to do it just then, he tarped the car in his driveway. Although he faithfully started the car and warmed it up annually to keep it in operating condition, the car was still tarped and unrestored when Joe died on his 61st birthday in 1996. The then-34-year-old Bonneville would have been a coveted restoration project but selling it off was not going to be an option.

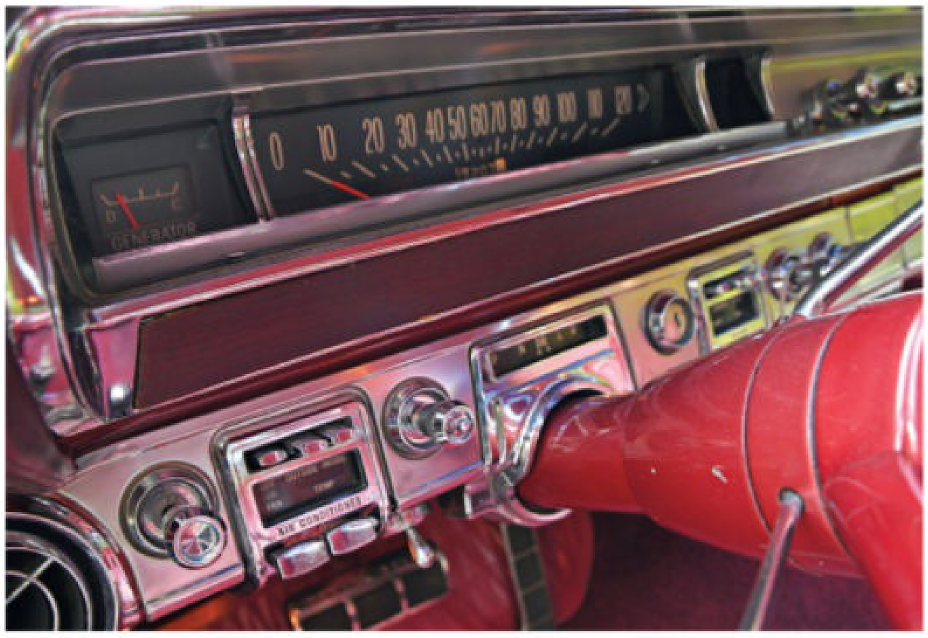
"Being an automobile mechanic, something always took him away from getting around to it. When he passed away, my mother said to me 'I don't want to see anyone else drive your father's car.'"

So charged, Anthony and his brothers Joe and Dom elected to do the Bonneville as right as possible. It received a four-year restoration that deserves its own separate story. Suffice it to say that although Anthony disclaims mechanical inclinations, he has done his father's legacy proud with how the Bonneville stands today.

Although it's correct and getting more so (Anthony took a gold award at his second POCI show and has spent the time since correcting everything that didn't pass muster at its first

BONNEVILLE





Tri-tone interiors were a Pontiac hallmark in the early 1960s and the maroon upholstery on the '62 is the perfect complement to its Cameo Ivory exterior.

judging), the Bonneville still sees plenty of road time thanks to its excellent driving manners.

"The best thing about going to an event like that," Anthony reports, "is not just showing it, but getting in the car, starting it up, listening to it run the way it should, feeling everything function the way it should: The eight-lug aluminum drums, automatic dimming headlights, the air conditioning working with R12 Freon… It's an old, carbureted motor. You pump the gas pedal twice, that sets the choke. It turns on and settles into fast idle, you let it warm up, then, once that hesitation is out, you know it's warmed up, and you put it in gear, and she goes.

"The motor is tuned just perfect. You don't hear anything out of that engine except for that thermostatic fan clutch. It's quiet as anything. You remember how Pontiac engines have that distinct hum when they idle—this one's got that. Just like from the factory. With the A/C on, on a hot day, the car doesn't flinch even with the brakes on. There's no threat of stalling, no hesitation.

"The steering wheel is set straight; the front-end alignment is perfect. She rides nice and straight. It's nice and comfortable. It floats on the highway, but straight as an arrow. It doesn't have the technology of today, but it rides so nice. It has original-type,

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> I'm really not looking for awards, it's just the idea of people seeing the car, appreciating the car, and learning its history that I like. I try to use the car weather-permitting. She may not be the perfect restoration, but I am thrilled that I can put the key in and get her to fire over, start and run like new, and take me where I need to get to safely. I know that Mom and Pop are looking down on us and smiling for being able to get Pop's car back on the road again.
>
> —*Anthony Griffo*

spiral-tube oil shocks and it rides the way it ought to. You could be driving along on the highway and hit a pothole; you feel that you go over the pothole, but you don't feel it like in today's cars where you feel that front suspension hit. This just drives over it like it's nothing. Even going over railroad tracks it goes up once, then dips back down the way it's supposed to.

"Even with the bias-ply tires, I don't really feel the difference between bias ply and radial tires. The only difference is that if you take a curve, you can hear the tire noise. You've got to be careful and take it at a slower speed because it doesn't handle as tight as the suspensions of today—but you can steer that car with one finger.

"She doesn't stop on a dime—maybe ten feet past the dime—but nice and straight. I've had the drums off once due to a leaky wheel cylinder and had the drums cut lightly only to re-true and re-center them. If you measure the inside of the drum and adjust the shoes properly, you'll be able get perfect grab on those drums and that's all you need, really.

"The car is safe; the car is reliable. If I needed it to take me somewhere it would get me there and home with no problem. It is a testament to the way the cars were built, the way they manufactured things back then; things fit the way they should and when you put these things back together properly, nothing leaks.

"The Cameo Ivory exterior with the maroon tri-color interior makes the car, and the eight-lug drum combination adds to it. It's just a pretty, pretty car. All those older cars, the way they were designed—the lines on those cars—the way the metal was fabricated—you don't see that today. It's just amazing."

Yes, it seems when a car is as handsome and capable as a 1962 Pontiac Bonneville Sports Coupe, there's no better way to appreciate it than to put it back to the way it was when it rolled off the assembly line. This one's ready for another six decades of service and more.

BONNEVILLE
New Jersey
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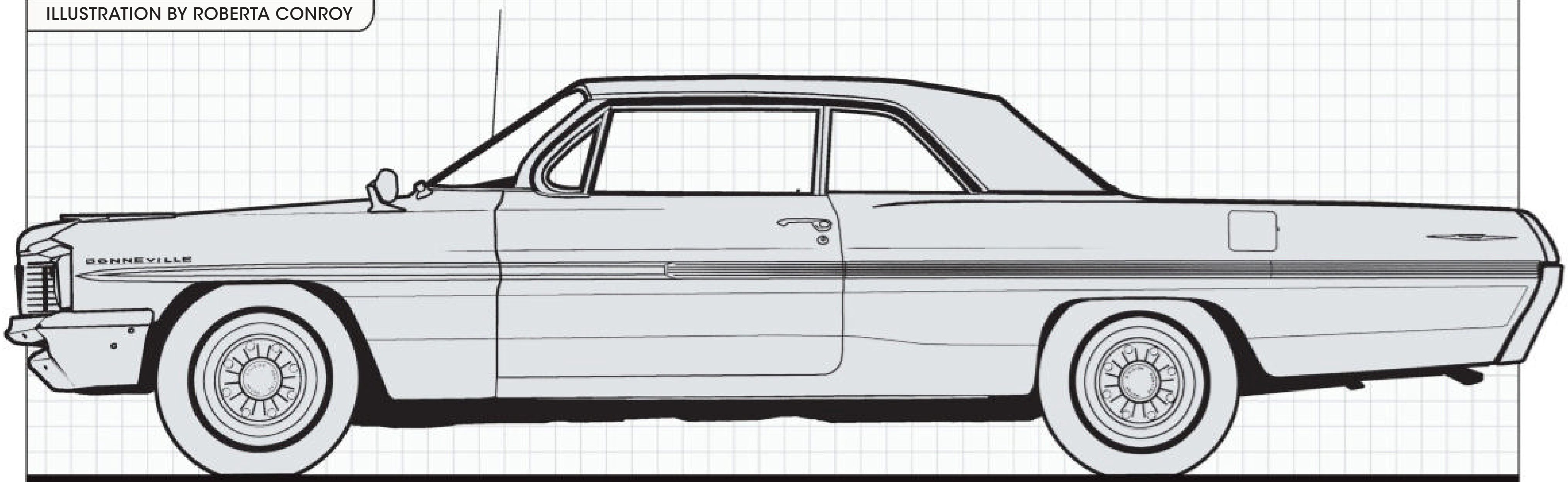
# 1962 PONTIAC **BONNEVILLE**

ILLUSTRATION BY ROBERTA CONROY



## SPECIFICATIONS

### PRICE

| | |
|---|---|
| BASE PRICE | $3,349.00 |
| OPTIONS | Super Deluxe manual radio and antenna, rear-seat speaker, foam front seat cushion, windshield washer, heavy-duty air cleaner, outside remote mirror, utility lamp, glovebox lamp, dome lamp, trunk lamp, parking-brake warning lamp, power steering, power brakes, tinted glass, power windows, GuideMatic self-dimming headlamps, eight-lug aluminum wheels and brake drums, whitewall tires, Hydra-Matic transmission, air conditioning. |

### ENGINE

| | |
|---|---|
| TYPE | Pontiac "Trophy" V-8, cast-iron block and heads |
| DISPLACEMENT | 389 cu.in. |
| BORE X STROKE | 4.06 x 3.75 inches |
| COMPRESSION RATIO | 10.25:1 |
| HORSEPOWER @ RPM | 303 @ 4,600 |
| TORQUE @ RPM | 425 lb-ft @ 2,800 |
| VALVETRAIN | Hydraulic |
| FUEL SYSTEM | Carter AFB four-barrel carburetor; mechanical fuel pump |
| EXHAUST SYSTEM | Cast-iron manifolds and dual, reverse-flow mufflers and tail pipes. |

### TRANSMISSION

| | |
|---|---|
| TYPE | General Motors Hydra-Matic |
| RATIOS | 1st/3.96:1 2nd/2.55:1 3rd/1.55:1 4th/1:1 Reverse/3.74:1 |

### DIFFERENTIAL

| | |
|---|---|
| TYPE | Hypoid, semi-floating |
| GEAR RATIO | 2.67:1 |

### STEERING

| | |
|---|---|
| TYPE | Link parallelogram with recirculating ball-bearing gear; power assisted |
| TURNING CIRCLE | 42.8 feet |

### BRAKES

| | |
|---|---|
| BRAKES | Hydraulic, power-assisted |
| FRONT | 11 x 2.5-inch aluminum drum |
| REAR | 11 x 2.0-inch aluminum drum |

### CHASSIS & BODY

| | |
|---|---|
| CONSTRUCTION | Body-on-frame |
| BODY STYLE | Two-door, six-passenger hardtop |
| LAYOUT | Front engine, rear-wheel drive |

### SUSPENSION

| | |
|---|---|
| FRONT | Independent; ball-joint with upper control arms pivoted on threaded bushings; coil springs; hydraulic shock absorbers; anti-sway bar |
| REAR | Solid axle; four-link, angle-mounted, rubber-cushioned upper and lower control arms; coil springs; angle-mounted hydraulic shock absorbers |

### WHEELS & TIRES

| | |
|---|---|
| WHEEL | Aluminum, eight-lug |
| FRONT/REAR | 14 x 6 inches |
| TIRES | Bias ply |
| FRONT/REAR | 8.00 x 14 |

### WEIGHTS & MEASURES

| | |
|---|---|
| WHEELBASE | 123 inches |
| OVERALL LENGTH | 218.6 inches |
| OVERALL WIDTH | 78.6 inches |
| OVERALL HEIGHT | 54.4 inches (loaded) |
| FRONT TRACK | 62.5 inches |
| REAR TRACK | 62.5 inches |
| SHIPPING WEIGHT | 3,900 pounds (approx.) |

### CALCULATED DATA

| | |
|---|---|
| BHP PER CU.IN. | 0.78 |
| WEIGHT PER CU.IN. | 10.0 pounds |

### PRODUCTION

FOR THE 1962 MODEL YEAR, PONTIAC PRODUCED 31,629 BONNEVILLE SPORTS COUPE TWO-DOOR HARDTOPS.

### PERFORMANCE*

| | |
|---|---|
| 0-60 MPH | 8.8 seconds |
| ¼-MILE ET | n/a |

* Listed results are from a road test of a 1962 Pontiac Bonneville four-door Vista hardtop equipped with a 303-hp 389-cu.in. engine, automatic transmission, and a 2.87:1 final-drive ratio, published in *Motor Trend's* March 1961 issue.

# A Twist of Lime

*An appreciation for Mercury's refined ride and styling rekindled long overdue drive time in this original, unrestored 1969 Montego*

**WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY MATTHEW LITWIN**

Remember when Mercury tried to sell its Milan? You know, the division's entry-level intermediate sedan named after the Italian city? Unveiled in 2005, it was available as an '06 model later in the year. Unfortunately, the only memorable aspect was Jill Wagner leaning against what was basically a re-trimmed Ford Fusion, fitted with plusher accoutrements, stating "You've gotta put Mercury on your list." Mercury sold 166,126 Milans through 2011 (including a scant 2,884 Hybrid versions against a projected 25,000 units annually), as compared to 572,866 Fusions during that period. This highlights a conundrum FoMoCo's mid-priced division had always seemed to face despite its best efforts.

Case in point is the 1969 Mercury Montego two-door hardtop gracing these pages. The intermediate model entered its second year of production on the heels of racing success, courtesy of Cale Yarborough, who drove his newly minted, Wood Brothers' prepared, Montego-based Cyclone fastback into the 1968 Daytona 500 winner's circle in

MERCURY
Montego
CLASSIC CAR
AAA

fine fashion. Despite its out-of-the-gate win against the Mopar juggernaut, and another six wins on the NASCAR circuit alone, it was Mercury's sibling—Torino—that stole the show, both on the track and in the showroom. And not by a slim margin: 172,083 Torino-badged units sold against Mercury's 114,893.

There certainly wasn't a lack of sales effort on Mercury's part. As had been the case a year prior, Mercury offered the 1969 Montego line in four series: the base single-model Comet Sports Coupe (which had already made the transition from its compact origins to the intermediate platform), Montego, upscale Montego MX, and top trim level and rather muscular Cyclone, all of which shared the same basic 116-inch wheelbase unit-body chassis as its Ford equivalents. Similarly, standard components (on most models) included a new 155-hp, 250-cu.in. six-cylinder engine paired with a three-speed manual transmission, which delivered power to a corporate 8-inch differential.

Naturally, Mercury's intermediate offered cozier accommodations and more sound dampening within the cabin, bolstered by a slightly longer list of standard comfort and convenience equipment. Similarly, exteriors received different trim—obvious among them, the grille and tail panels—but it didn't stop there. The fenders, quarter panels, and hood differed from those worn by its corporate siblings.

As was typical of Dearborn, options were plentiful, beginning with a more powerful, yet economical, two-barrel equipped 302-cu.in. V-8 rated for 220 hp. A two- and four-barrel 351 was also available, as was a four-barrel 390 and, for the gearhead, a 428 Cobra Jet. A four-speed manual and Select-Shift automatic were also on the list. Axle upgrades, front disc brakes, and a host of power assisted equipment and accessories were not excluded, either—it all boiled down to how much customers were willing to spend.

While the Montego was comparable to Pontiac's Tempest Custom S and Dodge's Coronet 440, five decades later it's the Torino that everyone remembers.

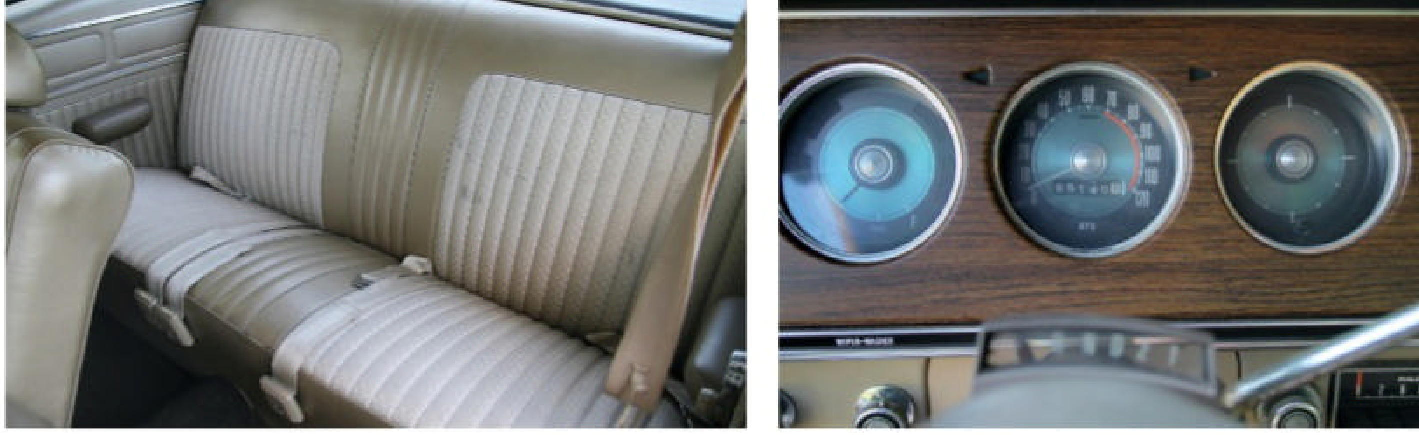
"Yeah, it's not a popular car. I've had people walk up to me and ask what a Montego is in complete bewilderment, and I tell them it's Mercury's version of a Ford Torino," Brad Dudley, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania resident and owner of our featured example, says. "The Montego is the same exact platform; same roofline and everything," he adds.

"My first car was a 1969 Montego two-door hardtop, one of the 17,787 that Mercury built that year. It was a two-barrel 302 car with a C4 automatic transmission that wore Burnt Orange metallic paint and a black interior. The car also had tinted windows, intermittent wipers, and the Sports Special package that added extra trim, including the turbine-style wheel covers. My grandfather bought it new, and he racked up some miles on it before I ended up with the car."

Brad took an immediate liking to Mercury's styling and plush appointments and became very familiar with what it took to keep the intermediate on the road.

"It was an original Pennsylvania car with well over 100,000 miles on it by the time rust had its way. The quarter panels, floors, frame rails, and such finally went, so I parked the car with the hope of restoring it later, but that never happened. Mechanically, parts could still be purchased, but back then, nobody made replacement structural or body parts. A small patch could rectify things, but once rust set in it was hard to keep on the road. I finally sent it off when I was probably 22 or 23 years old; I still have the original title and factory paperwork, but that Montego is long gone," Brad says.

Flash forward a couple decades.



“Woodtone” paneling surrounding the instrument cluster was standard equipment, as was a cloth/vinyl bench seat.

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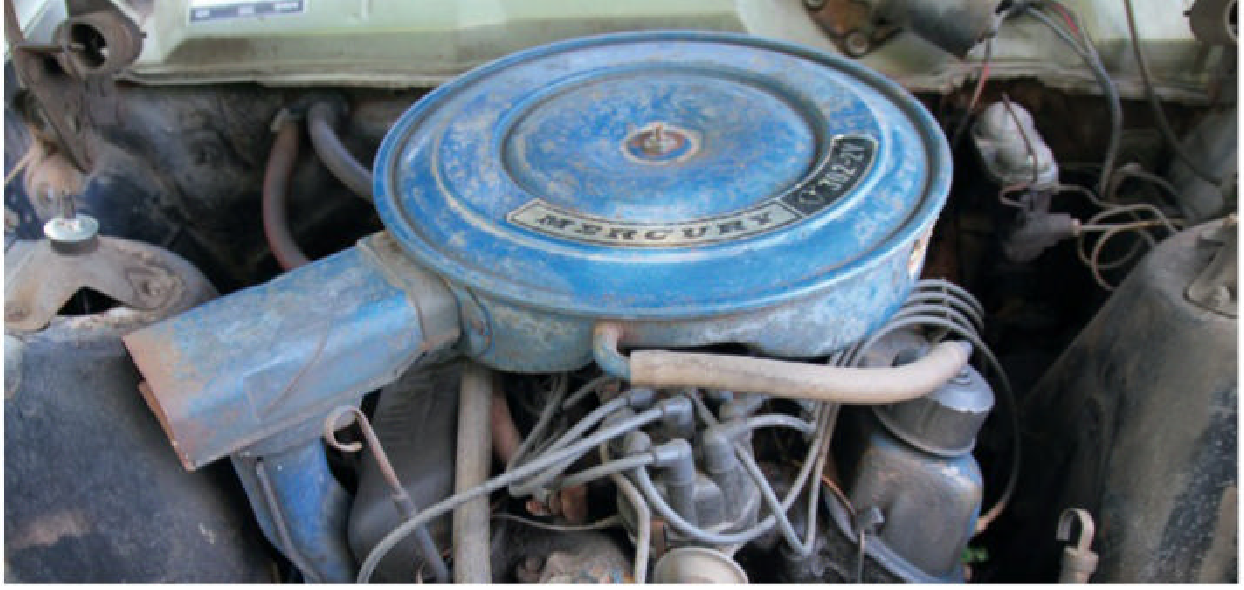

**The Montego's 220-hp, 302-cu.in. engine was a venerable two-barrel economy V-8 that has managed all 65,140 miles showing on the odometer. Owner Brad reports he's yet to change the spark plugs.**

By 2019 Brad was in the position to join the vast realm of vintage vehicle ownership, and he still harbored a deep appreciation for Mercury's styling of the first-gen Montegos. He began searching for an example, with a little help.

"I mentioned to a friend that I really wanted a Montego, and that if he spotted anything for sale, he should let me know. He agreed, but not without confessing that he didn't know what kind of car that was to begin with—he'd never heard of it. One day he gave me a shout and said, 'I think I found what you're looking for. I'll send you the link.'"

Brad's friend had been scrolling through social media when he spotted the Mercury, listed as an all-original two-door hardtop with a base 302 V-8 and automatic transmission. Even better, it was a couple hours north in Hughesville, Pennsylvania.

"I went to look at the car and that was it. The Montego was basically the same exact car I had, except the color, and it lacked tinted windows and intermittent wipers. All the other options were there, including the Sports Package, so it was checking all the right boxes. And then I found out it had been in the same family since new," Brad says, adding, "They had purchased it from Murray Motors, which was then located just down the road in Muncy, Pennsylvania. They're still in business today."

According to the family, the Mercury was driven back and forth to their Florida winter home the first couple years of their

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> I can drive it all day long and not break the fuel bank.

ownership, but a second car took over all future long-distance treks. That meant the Montego was stowed in the family garage, away from the harmful effects of salt-covered roads. Mileage, in turn, was minimized. But that's not to say other hazards were avoided.

According to Brad, "They hit a deer with it sometime around 1992. The impact damaged the hood and grille, broke the windshield washer reservoir bottle, and twisted the radiator support a little bit, but that was it. They replaced the hood—the one on the car is painted blue underneath—and the grille. When I looked at the car, the original broken grille was still in the trunk. They also saved all the original factory and dealer paperwork. Trying not to look too anxious, I looked it over, pointed out a few things that were going to need to be done, and made an offer. We struck a deal that day."

After bringing it home on his trailer, Brad requested and received a Marti Report. It stated that his Montego was one of 1,831 that had been painted Medium Lime metallic, of which 89 were fitted with Nugget Gold cloth bench seats. Just 30 of those were equipped with the Montego Sports Special package. Further, his was one of 27 that had the power steering option. A one-of-27 report might make someone else pause their work on a car, but not Brad.

He had a new set of white-stripe radial tires installed on the original steel wheels, replaced the engine's belts and radiator hoses—as well as two brake lines—changed the oil and filter, and replaced the sagging rear springs. A dual exhaust system was also installed, as the original single exhaust had rotted.

"Other than the tires, for drivability, the exhaust is the only modification. It's the same factory-style system that would have come on a 1967 Comet GT. Dual exhaust was only available on these when you ordered a 351 (or larger) engine, and those used large-diameter tubing, but this being a base 302 I opted for the smaller tubing designed for the 289," Brad reports. "I've been driving it since, about 400 or 500 miles annually. There's a lot of events near me, so I don't have to drive far to enjoy doing things with it."

To that point, Brad reports, "Other than the old-car rattles you get with an original car, the Montego is very quiet—it's no different than driving a mid-Seventies or early-Eighties car with a V-8 and automatic transmission. You get on the gas on the highway, and it'll shift down by itself and go. It'll cruise all day long at 65-70 mph no questions asked, and still get about 20 miles per gallon. That's the nice part, especially the way gas prices were this past summer. It's only a two-barrel carburetor on the intake, and a

2.79:1 highway gearset in the differential, so if you keep your foot off of it and let it ride it'll only turn 2,100 or 2,200 rpm at 65 mph, so it's not like it's overworking. That's what I love about this drivetrain. I can drive it all day long and not break the fuel bank."

Although the quiet and comfortable drive that Mercury offered is a pleasurable experience, veteran enthusiasts have long been aware that maintenance and upkeep are crucial to driving longevity. Decades later, the aftermarket has responded, ironically in part due to the Torino's popularity today.

Brad notes, "There are companies that are starting to reproduce a lot of the basic structural parts, like floorpans, cowls, and inner and outer rocker panels, because they match the Torino; the availability of some of that stuff is getting better. But it's still the Mercury version, so you're not going get the outer body pieces because the fenders and quarters are different. Another thing to be mindful of is that the rear body panels are generally stamped for the fastbacks, not the hardtops. But if you find a Montego that was rotted out somewhere, it would be fixable today. As far as the trim and such goes, most of it is available through car show and swap-meet shopping. Mechanically it's all Ford, though; mine is a typical 302 with a C4 automatic which has been around forever, with a Ford 8-inch rear. That stuff is available.

"One of these days I'll dig deeper into it and will change out some more mechanical parts, but for now she runs just fine on the old stuff that was in the car when I bought it. I just love getting in it and going for a drive. Why fix what isn't broken?"

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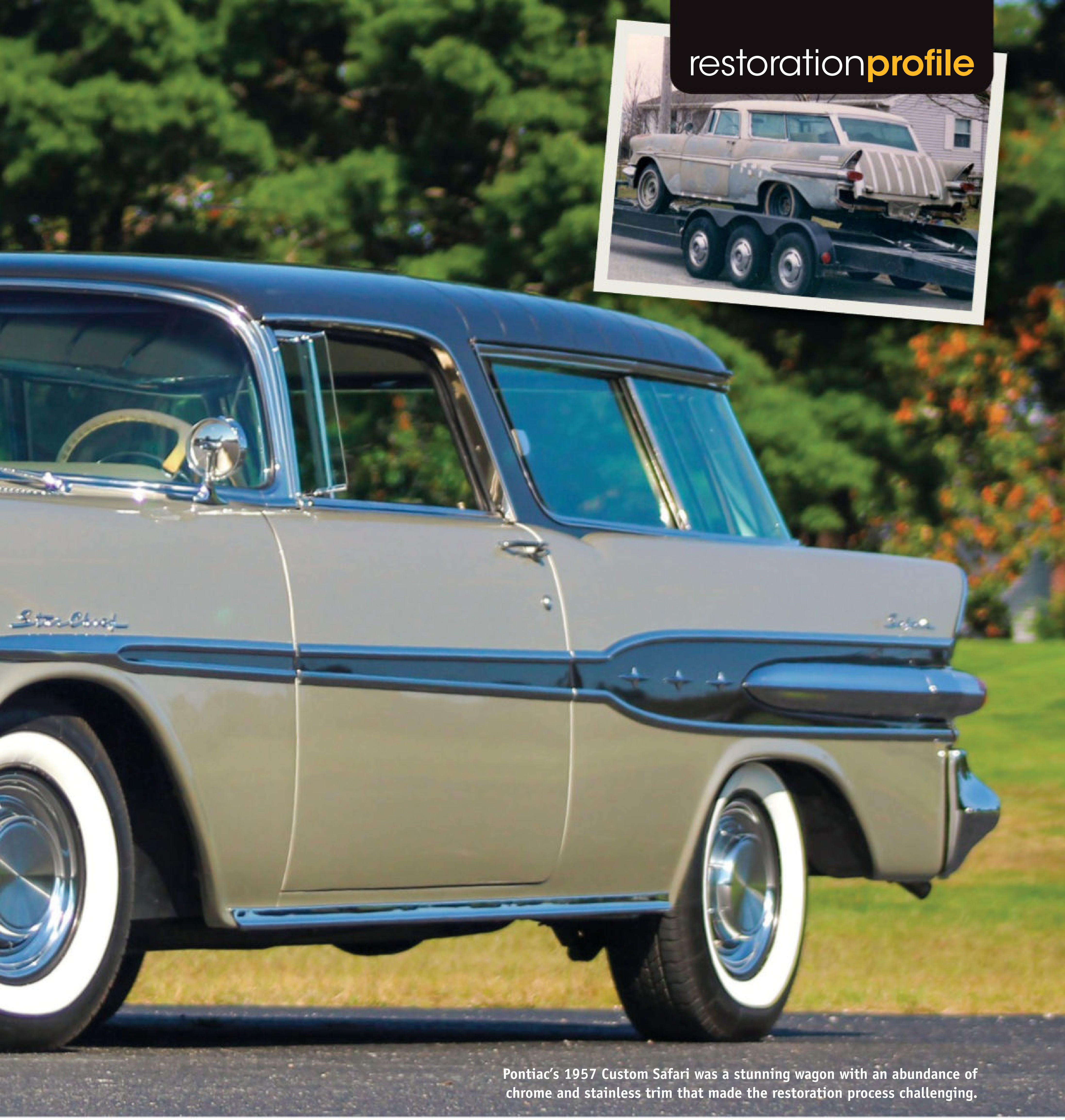
# Custom Safari Saga

*The restoration of this rare 1957 Pontiac forged lasting memories between father, mother, and son.*

**WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY JIM BLACK** • RESTORATION PHOTOGRAPHY BY KATHY & WHEELER BRADLEY

It wasn't that Pontiac didn't offer a station wagon during the immediate postwar years — the division saw to that as soon as production resumed for the 1946 season — but rather its mid-decade Custom Safari broke design tradition in visually stunning fashion.



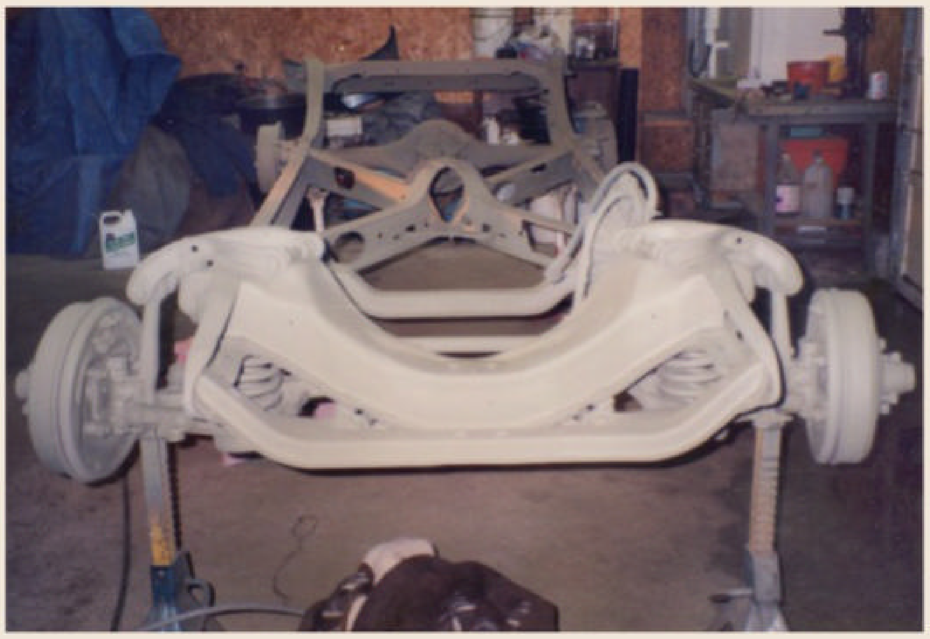
**Pontiac's 1957 Custom Safari was a stunning wagon with an abundance of chrome and stainless trim that made the restoration process challenging.**

Introduced for 1955, the all-new Custom Safari was a sporty two-door station wagon designed as an up-market complement to Chevrolet's Nomad utilizing the same 122-inch wheelbase A-body chassis and Fisher Body shell. Although on a short chassis, Pontiac considered the Safari part of its larger B-body Star Chief series, officially designating it as the Star Chief Custom (Series 27).

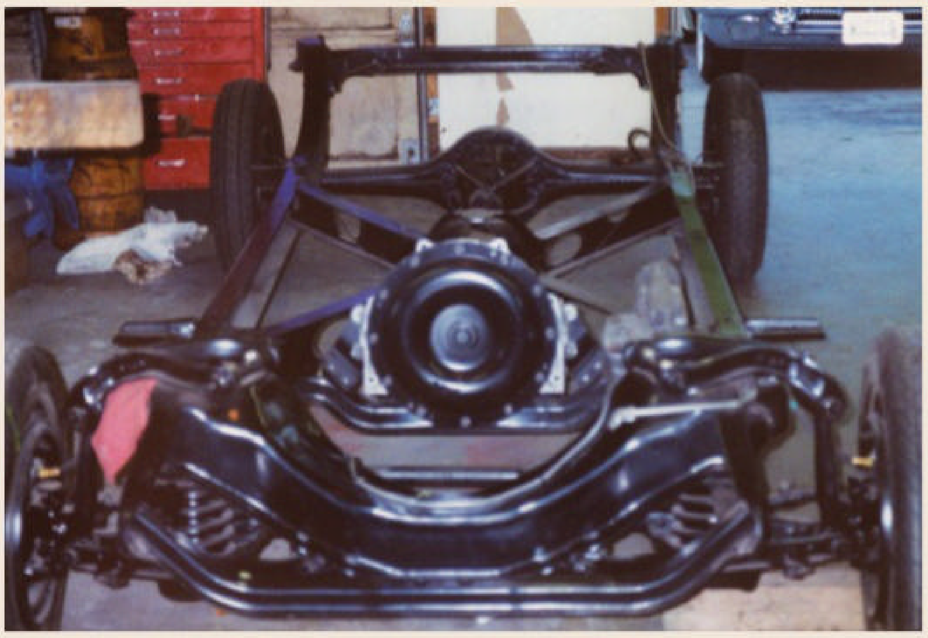
The Custom Safari was differentiated from the similarly styled Chieftain 860 Colony two-door wagon (also introduced in '55) by a forward rake "B" pillar—versus a vertical pillar—and an angled tailgate, as well as a ribbed roof panel, and the inclusion of upscale Star Chief trim. Furthermore, the Safari had a hardtop vibe thanks to thin-framed sliding side windows, a feature not incorporated into the Chieftain 860 Colony.

At introduction, the two-door was powered by Pontiac's 287.2-cu.in. "Strato-Streak" engine that, paired with a standard

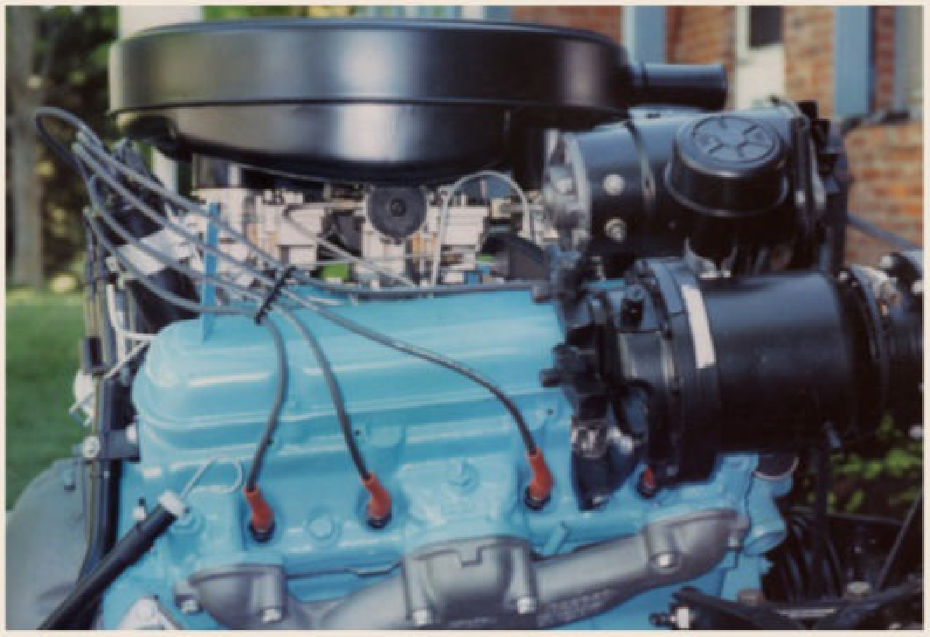
Nine-year-old Wheeler III poses in front of the Safari's body shell, which had already been separated from the frame and placed on temporary floor stands. Note the forward rake of the "B" and rear pillars seen on every two-door Custom Safari.



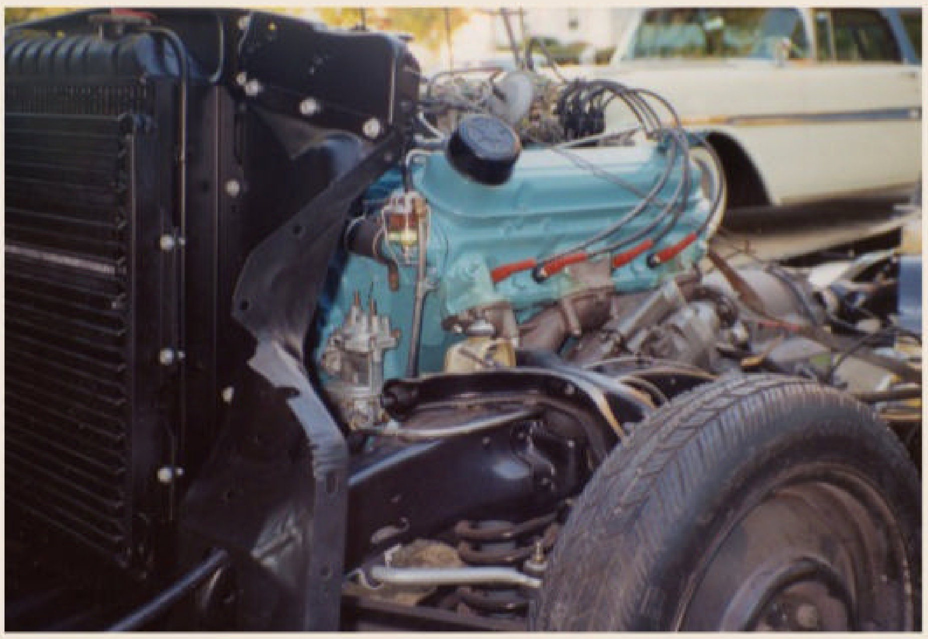
Wheeler II built a special sand-blasting booth within the family garage to media blast the frame to bare metal. As seen here, it's already received a coat of primer — to ward off flash corrosion — in advance of paint.



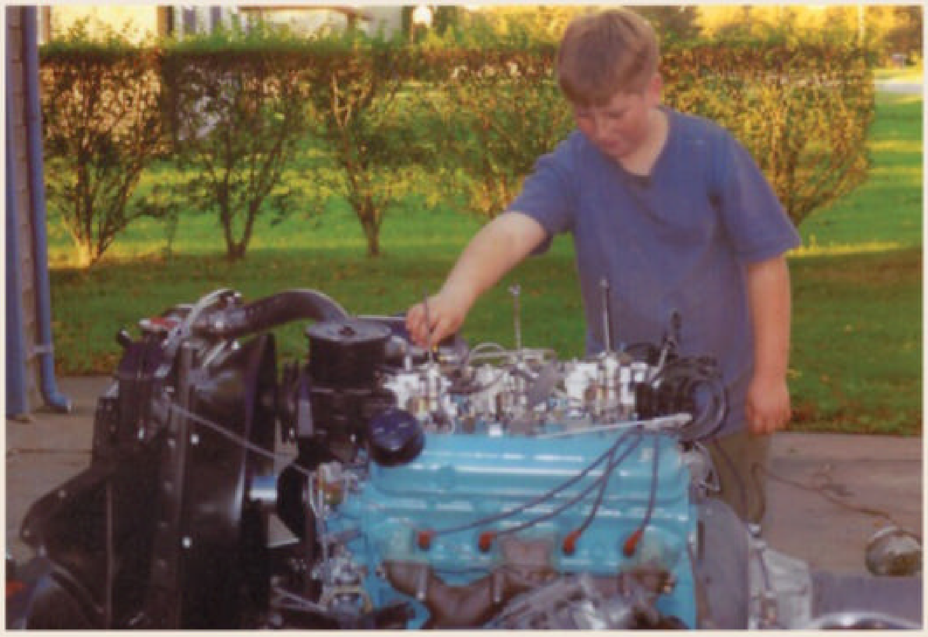
At this stage, the Pontiac's 122-inch wheelbase was painted chassis black and most of the new suspension components were reinstalled, including new brakes, stainless lines, and the Hydra-Matic transmission.



Wheeler II rebuilt Pontiac's 347-cu.in. V-8 to stock form, although he chose to upgrade the V-8 with the new-for-1957 Tri-Power induction option. Everything was carefully detailed and painted as correctly as possible.



The finished drivetrain was reinstalled in the chassis along with the radiator and core support and other miscellaneous components. A keen eye will note the family's other Custom Safari in the background.



Prior to mounting the body to the chassis the engine was test run to determine if any problems existed. Assisting with the test is Wheeler III. Much to the duo's delight, the engine performed as expected.

**Above: Wheeler II's 1957 Custom Safari purchased in 2019. Right: Stuck in 1957, Wheeler II's collection is comprised of an all-original red Super Chief, restored gray-and-silver Star Chief, and two Custom Safari wagons: one in blue and white and the other (featured) painted gray and silver.**

synchromesh transmission, boasted a rating of 173 hp. When combined with an optional Hydra-Matic, the engine's compression was increased from 7.4 to 8.0:1 that, in turn, helped increase output to 180 hp. Other Pontiac power teams were optional.

The Custom Safari—now considered one of the milestone cars of the Tri-Five Era—saw model year updates, both visually and mechanically, through 1957, but one thing that remained consistent was its price: The sporty wagon was the most expensive Pontiac on the market. Thus, it was also exclusive. Only 9,094 were built during its three years on sale. And yet, like all milestone cars, the Custom Safari left an indelible impression among thousands more, including Wheeler Bradley II of Middletown, Rhode Island.

"My dad had four 1957 Pontiacs that he always seemed to be working on while I was growing up," his son, Wheeler Bradley III, recalls. "He was really stuck on the '57 Star Chief, Super Chief, and later the '57 Custom Safari wagon, so his collection ultimately included one Star Chief, one Super Chief, and two Safari wagons. Dad passed away in July of 2020 and today I maintain and show the cars in his memory."

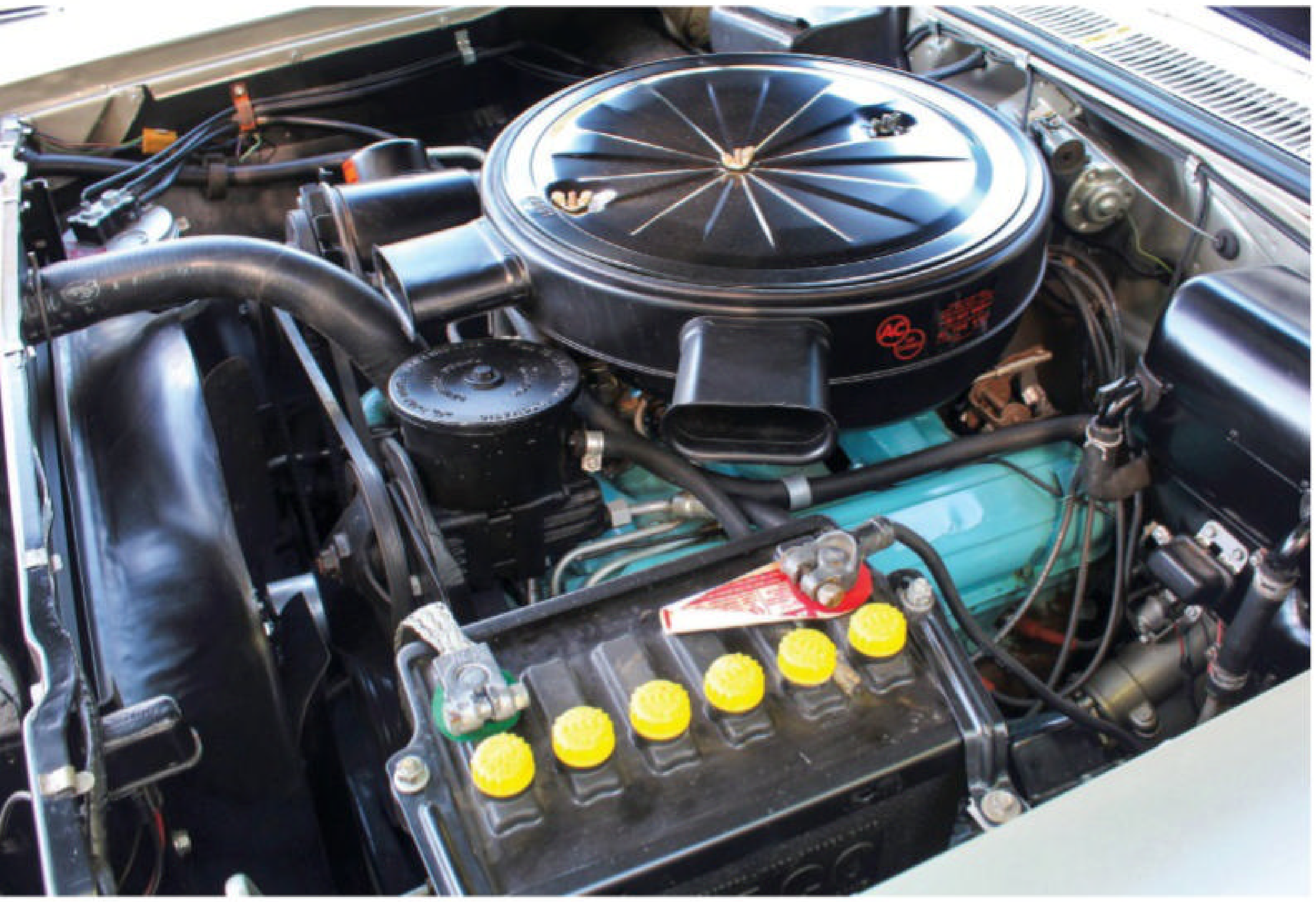
This collection began in 1981 with the purchase of a charcoal-and-silver 2-door Star Chief that the elder Wheeler started to restore, but a few years later it was sidelined when he purchased his first '57 Custom Safari in 1988. Then, a few days later, Wheeler bought another '57 Super Chief he found advertised and he just had to have.

"It was an all-original, unrestored car in very good condition, and Dad chose to leave it as is. It's funny that he bought both these cars the same week I was born! He started the restoration on the Safari a short time later and it took him four to five years to get that one done," the younger Wheeler says.

In 1995, a couple of years after completing the restoration of his first Safari, Wheeler II went looking for a second '57 Safari wagon, which was soon found and purchased from a seller in Arizona.

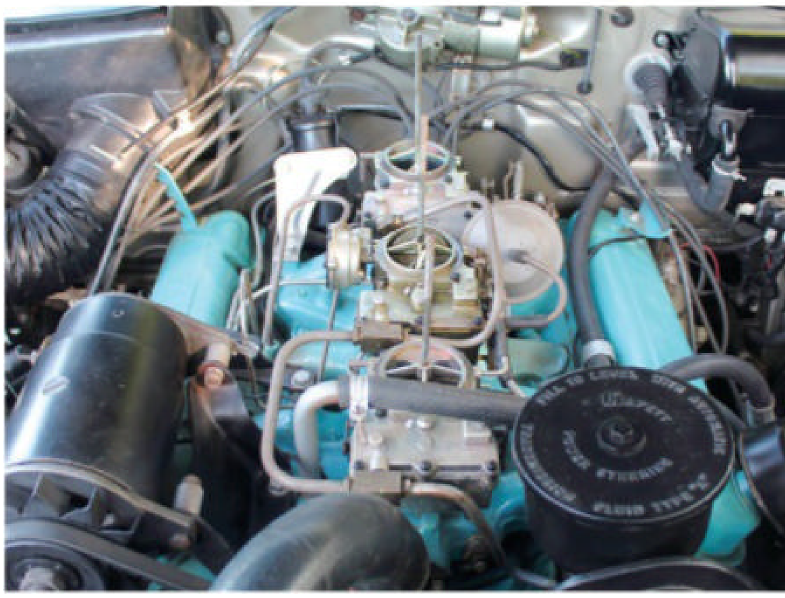
Wheeler II's latest 1957 Star Chief Custom Safari wagon ranks among the rarest of the short-lived breed. Only 1,292 were built during the year, and it's been reported that only about a dozen were optioned with factory air conditioning, including Wheeler II's. Originally finished in two-tone charcoal and silver beige, it was also optioned with power steering, power brakes, power windows, leather and cloth upholstery, and a Wonder Bar radio. Below the hood was a then-standard four-barrel equipped 347-cu.in. V-8, paired with an optional Hydra-Matic transmission and a 3.23:1 final drive ratio.

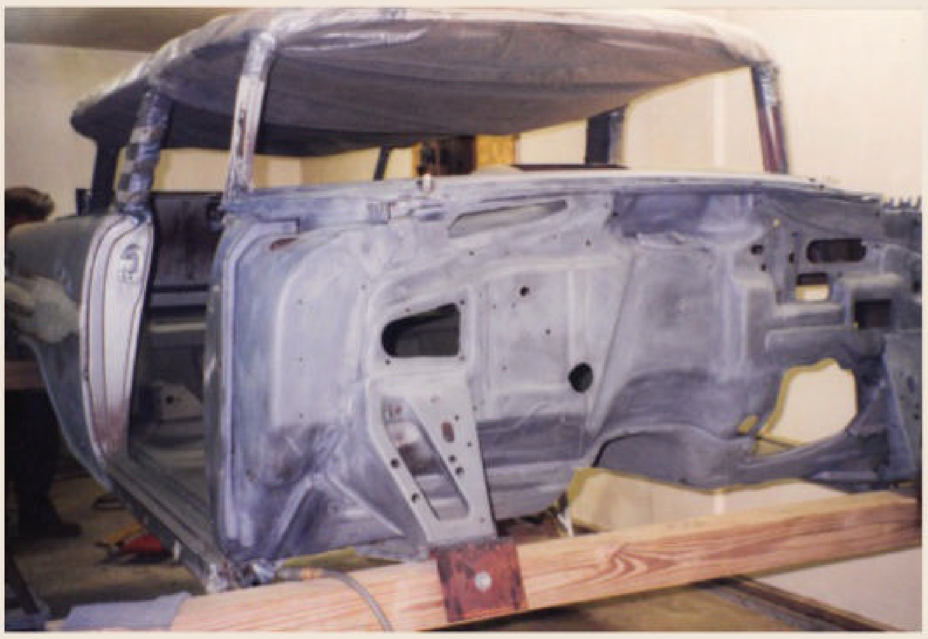
"We had issues with the car carrier, and it took 13 months to get the car delivered," Wheeler II's wife Kathy recalls. "It was worth the wait since it was a rust-free and complete car, but it needed a lot of work—a true 'diamond in the rough'



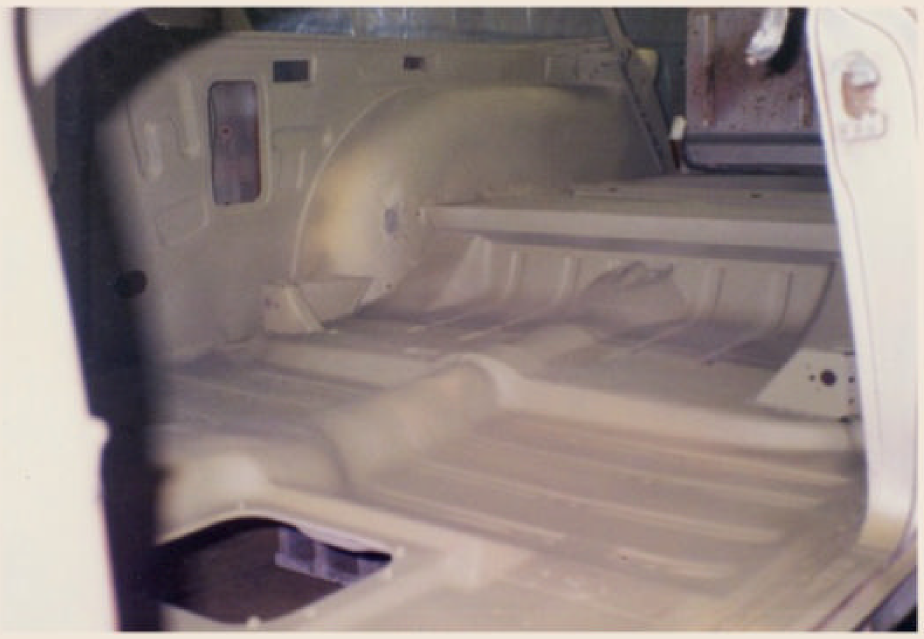
**The original 347-cu.in. V-8 was rebuilt. The car was built with power steering, power brakes, and factory air-conditioning options.**

**Wheeler II sidelined the stock four-barrel induction and installed a trio of Rochester two-barrel carburetors, which were a new-for-1957 "Tri-Power" option offered mid-year.**

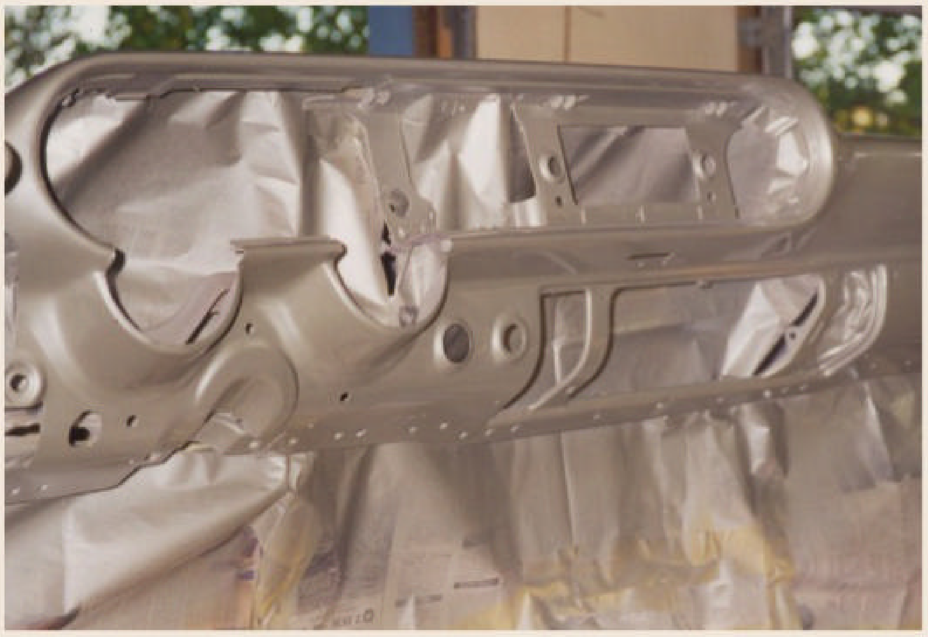




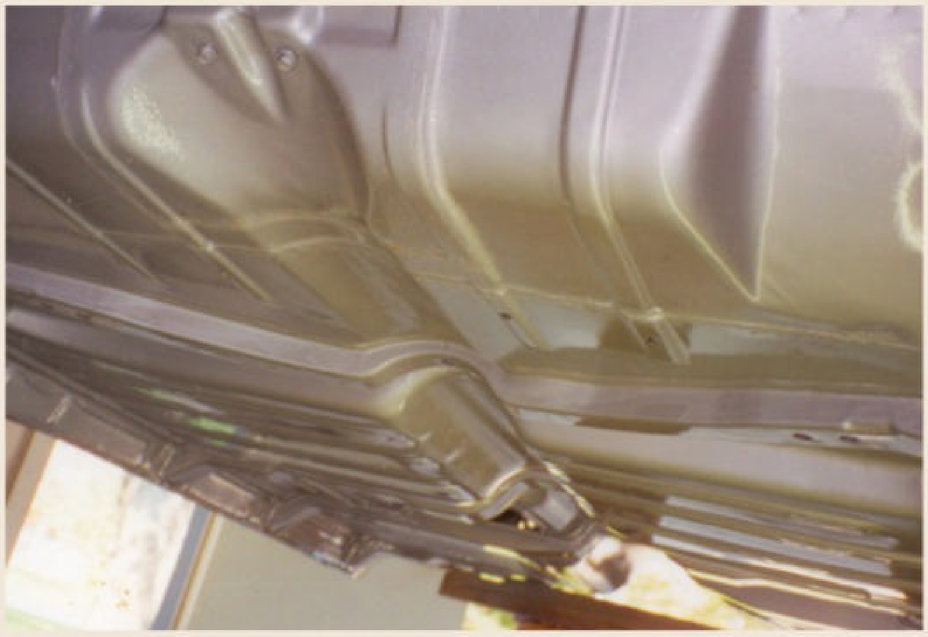
The main body shell, pictured here, along with the other removable panels, were carefully stripped to bare metal, repaired if necessary, primed, and block-sanded in preparation for the next phase.



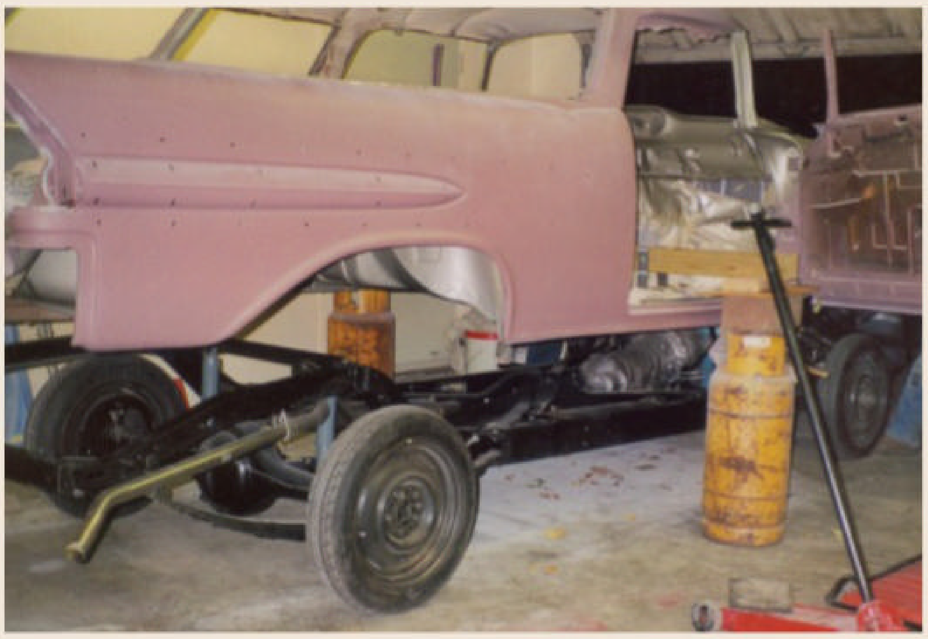
After the application and sanding of high-build and epoxy primers, one of the final stages is the spraying of a final coat of primer sealer. As seen here, the Safari's interior has been completed and, officially, ready for paint.



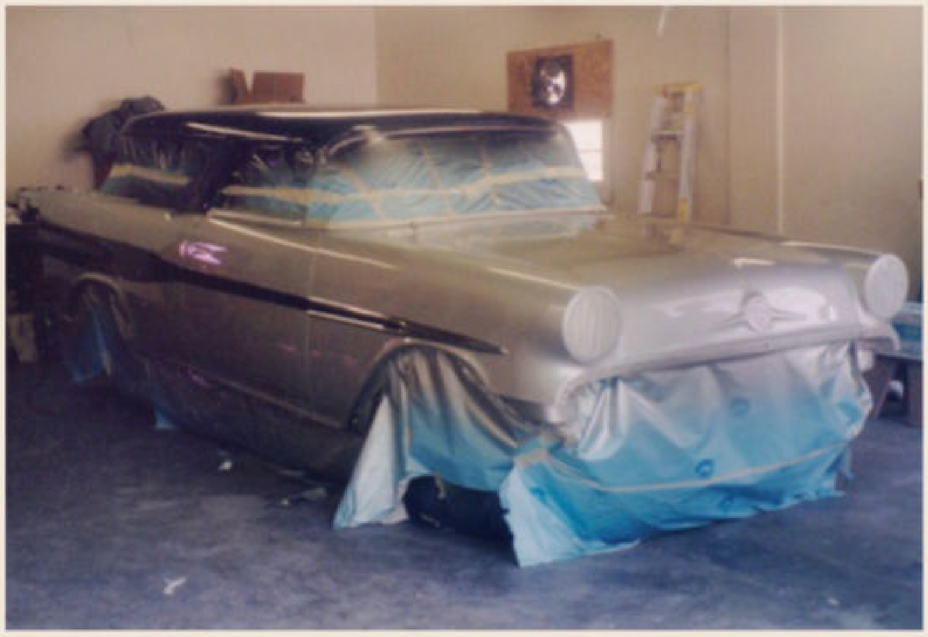
Along with the Custom Safari's cabin space, the dash has been painted silver beige — using single-stage urethane — matched to what the factory painted the Pontiac when it was built new.



Similarly, the underside of the body shell was also sprayed in a single-stage urethane in the same silver beige color. The one repair made to the floorboard is now completely invisible, thanks in part to careful body prep.



With the underside and interior painting completed and cured, the body is in the process of being carefully lowered onto the chassis. New body mounts were simultaneously installed.



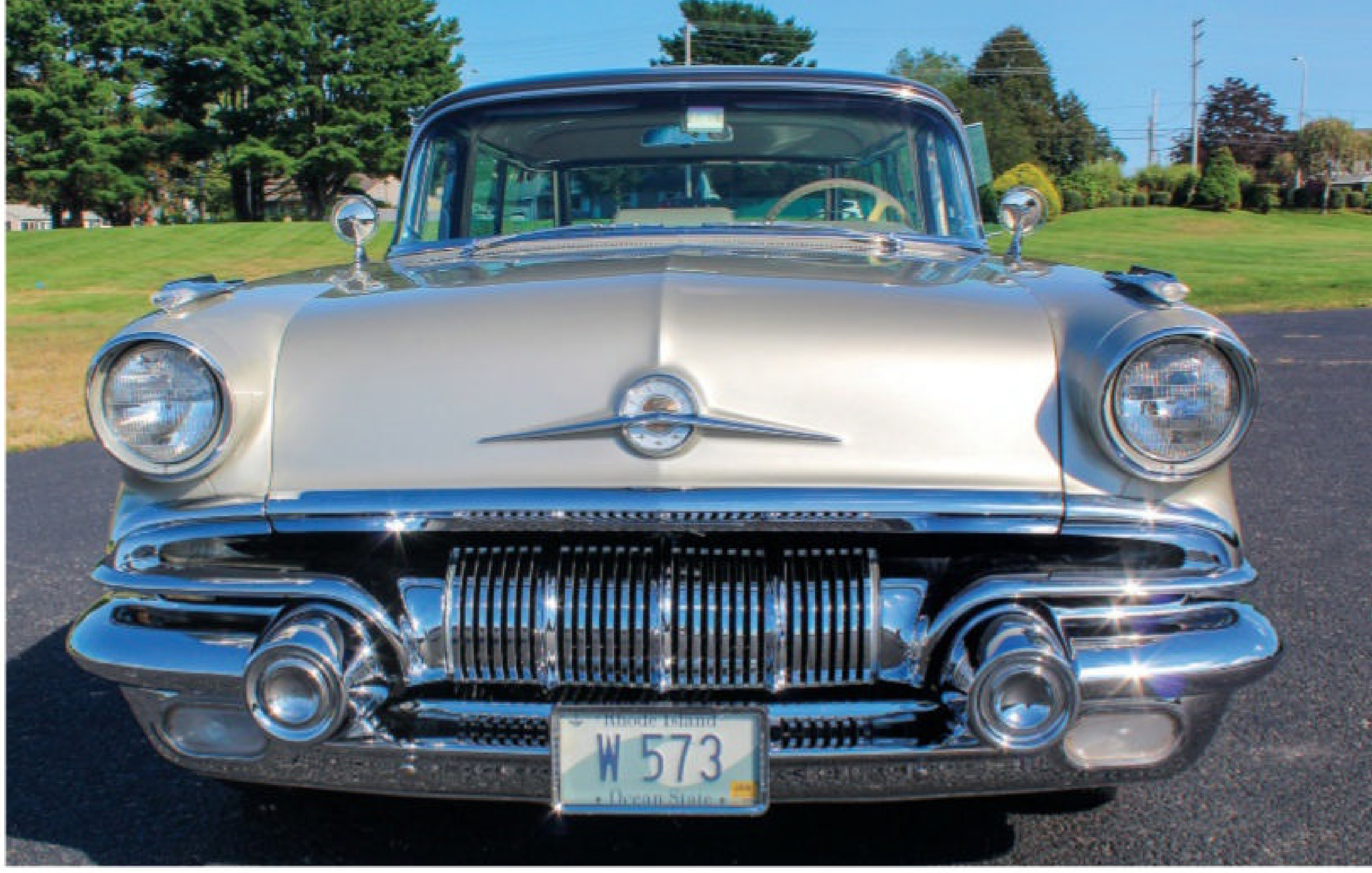
At this stage, the Safari's cabin and chassis were carefully masked off and the exterior body was sprayed in the correct two-tone scheme of silver beige and charcoal using a two-stage urethane. Final reassembly is next.

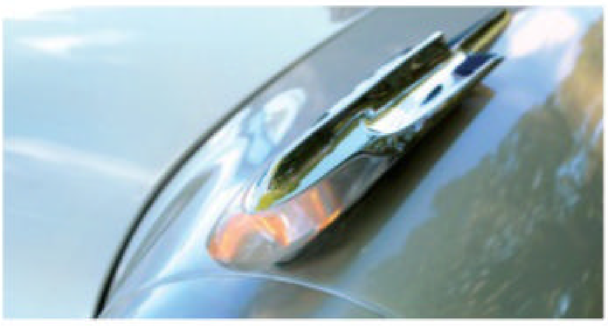
as my husband used to say. He was an amazing man. He could repair anything on these cars, from overhauling an engine to fixing the clock in the dash. He truly enjoyed every minute of it."

Having since retired as an auto mechanic, the elder Wheeler embarked on what would turn out to be a five-year, no-expense-spared body-off-frame restoration that started with the car's complete disassembly. Everything was bagged and/or tagged, while a list of needed replacement parts was created. Following disassembly, the body was lifted off the frame and placed on floor stands as work began on the chassis.

"Wheeler II built a sand-blasting booth in our garage, stripped the frame bare, and then repainted it," Kathy recalls. "He spent the next three months rebuilding everything with new suspension parts, bushings, stainless steel brake lines and fuel lines, new shocks, and NOS brake drums."

Once the chassis was finished, Wheeler tore down the numbers-matching V-8 and rebuilt it to stock specifications, with one exception: He replaced the original four-barrel induction system with a factory Tri-Power setup. Three versions were released in December 1956, two of which were tied to NASCAR racing.





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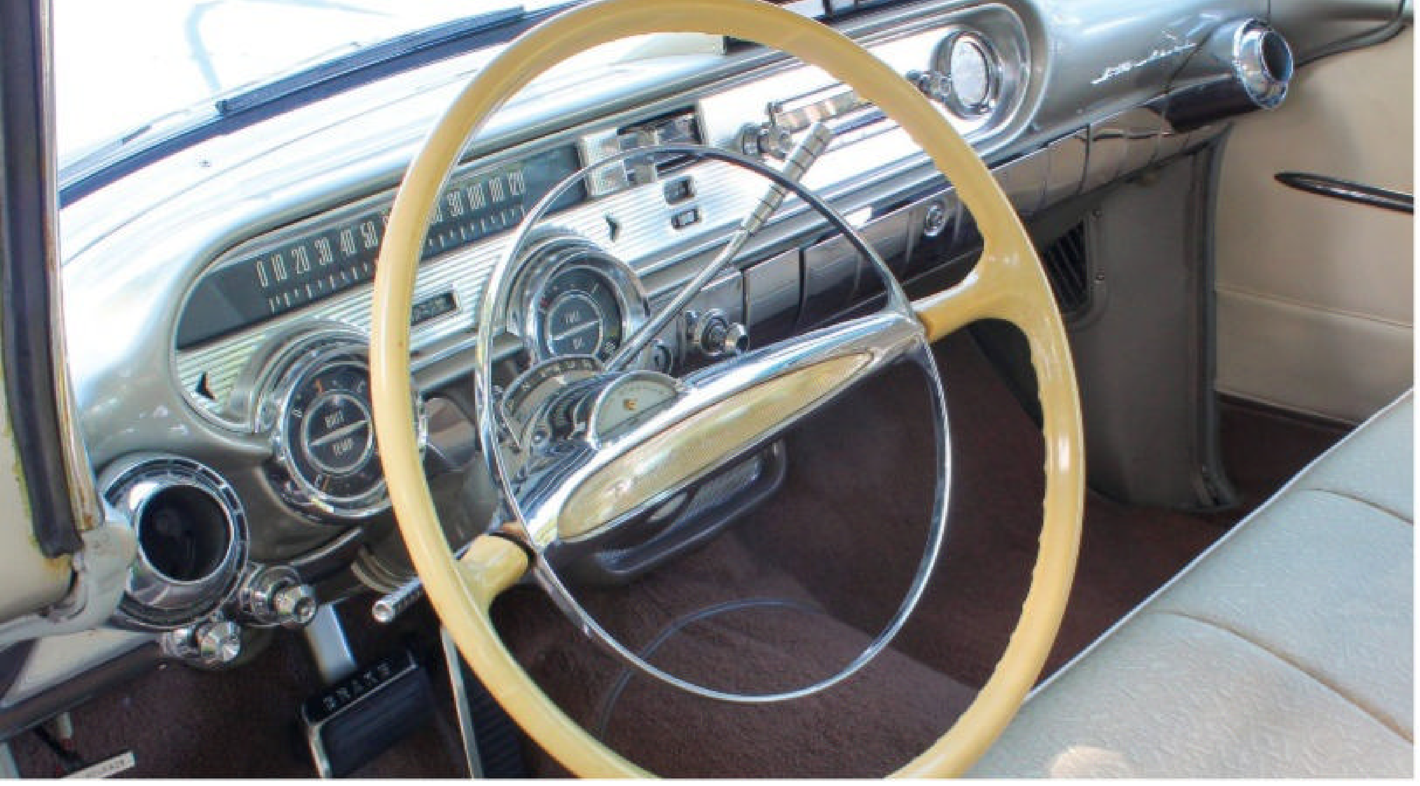


**It doesn't get more luxurious than a Custom Safari from the Fifties. Aside from power-assist accessories, this one came equipped with a full set of gauges, clock, Wonder Bar radio, and leather and fabric upholstery.**

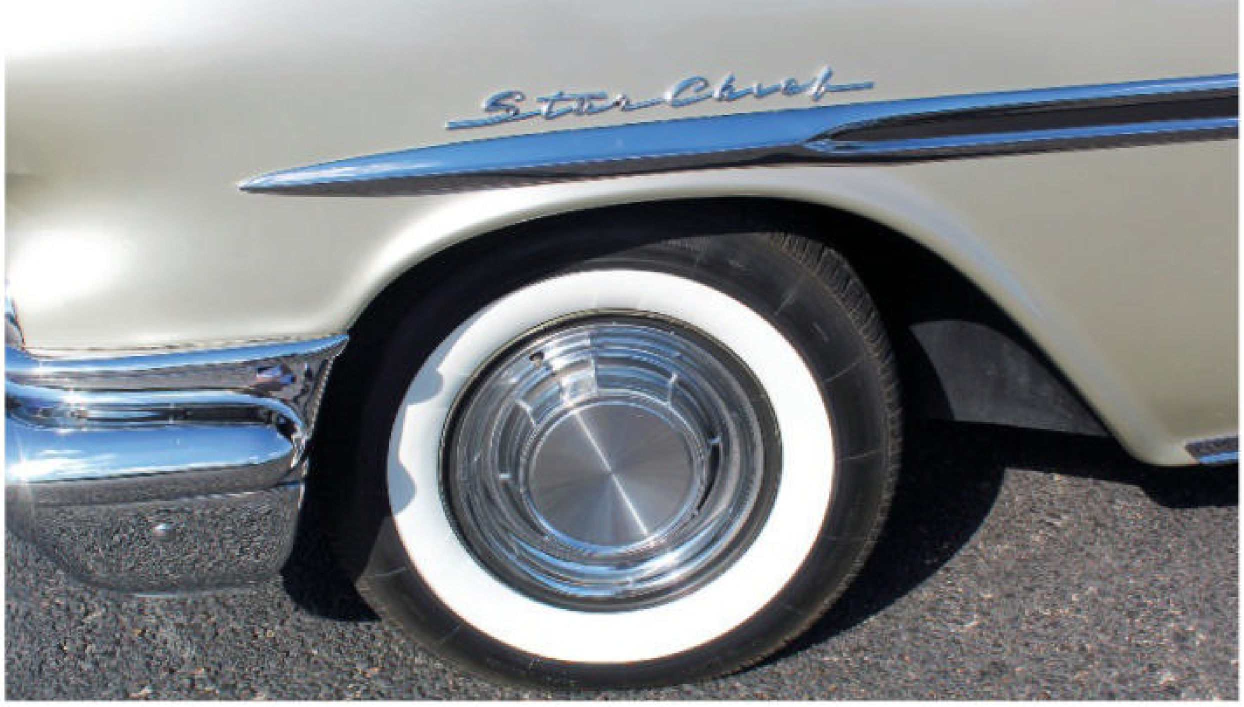
The third was a street-use version that used a trio of Rochester two-barrel units. Without altering the engine's 10:1 compression, the street Tri-Power boosted output from 270 to 290 hp. Not to be forgotten, Wheeler also rebuilt the Hydra-Matic transmission and rear differential. Once finished, he reinstalled them in the chassis and test-ran the engine.

Next to be restored were the body and paint, and Wheeler—with the help of a family friend—stripped the body shell to bare metal. The Pontiac was an Arizona car, so it had very little rust. Only the driver's side floorpan and the lower rear quarters required repairs. Soon after, they had the car blocked, primed, and arrow straight ready for paint.

The same friend painted the Custom Safari in the Bradley family garage. Using single stage urethane, the body's underside, interior, and dash were refinished first. Once that cured, the body was lowered onto the chassis and two-stage urethane was applied to the exterior: four coats of two-tone charcoal and silver beige, followed by three coats of clear. After sufficient cure time, the finish was wet sanded using progressive grits, and then compound buffed and polished to a brilliant shine.

Reassembly then began in earnest with the help of the whole family. Wheeler II, Kathy, and Wheeler III installed new date-coded glass, rechromed bumpers, exterior trim, and parts of the new interior. Wheeler had ordered the correct leather and cloth material for the seats, as well as the new headliner, carpet, and door panels, all from SMS Auto Fabrics. Top End Upholstery, in Bristol, Rhode Island, did most of the installation. Other interior work also included restoring the deluxe steering wheel, instrument cluster and gauges, radio, and clock. The Safari's stock steel wheels, meanwhile, were fitted with Coker Classic P225/75R14 wide-whitewall radials with stainless wheel covers.

"It seemed like my dad and I spent hours hanging the front fenders, doors, and hood," Wheeler III says. "He wanted everything to look just right with the proper gaps, and the fit and finish was better than what the assembly line did. It



**The Safari rides on a set of stock wheels with Coker Classic P225/75R14 wide-whitewall radials with stainless wheel covers.**

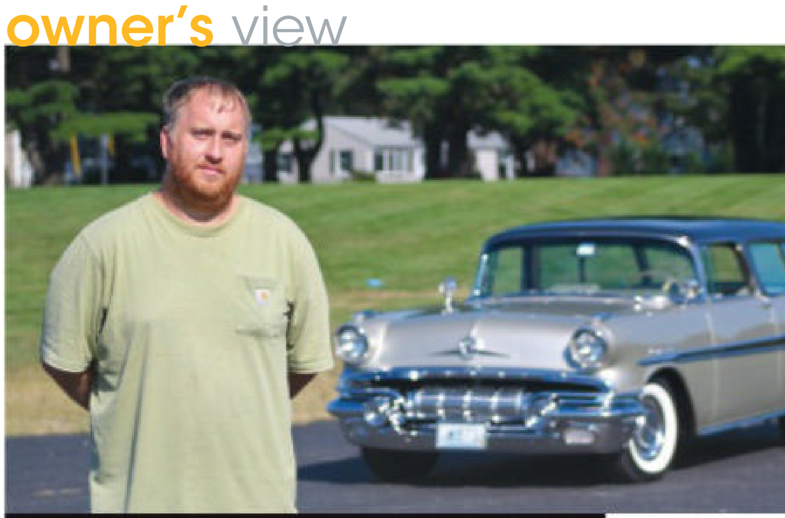
was a lot of hard work to achieve, but the effort was worth it."

"One of the most time-consuming projects was repairing the interior and exterior stainless trim, particularly removing all the dents and scratches," Kathy adds. "Wheeler made his own tools to do the job and then spent countless days and nights to get it done. He even taught our son how to do the work to lessen the burden."

Finally in 2000 the Custom Safari was finished, and Wheeler soon enjoyed showing it throughout the Northeast. According to Kathy, "It won Best of Show in its first outing, followed by several other Best of Shows, Best GM, Best Paint, and Best Interior awards. It also won a Best of Show at the Autos of the World Car Show in [nearby] Warwick where my husband was interviewed for a television show."

"In 2018 my dad's health was starting to decline, so I dug his 1957 Star Chief out of storage and finished it for him as a surprise. It had been sitting since '88," Wheeler III proclaims. "The body and paint had already been done, but I still spent many nights and weekends working to get the car finished so dad still had some time to enjoy it—and the other Pontiacs—before he passed."

## owner's view



**It was a bonding experience for me, my dad, and my mother to spend time working on this car together. I learned a lot from my dad about the restoration process, and his love of '57 Pontiacs must have rubbed off on me, too, because in 2019 I bought my own '57 Pontiac Safari wagon." —*Wheeler Bradley III***

"Wheeler could sit and talk about the '57 Pontiacs for hours," Kathy admits. "He knew everything about them, and he was so proud—as we are—of this 1957 Custom Safari wagon."

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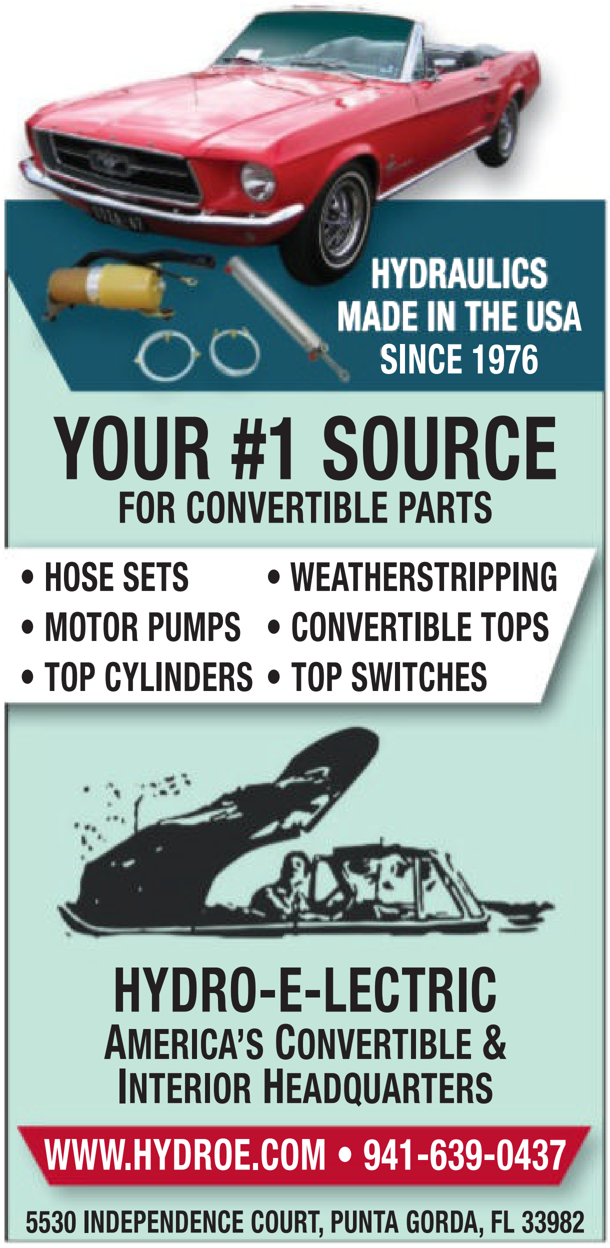
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# 1971-1974 Javelin, Javelin SST, and Javelin AMX

## *American Motors' last pony cars*

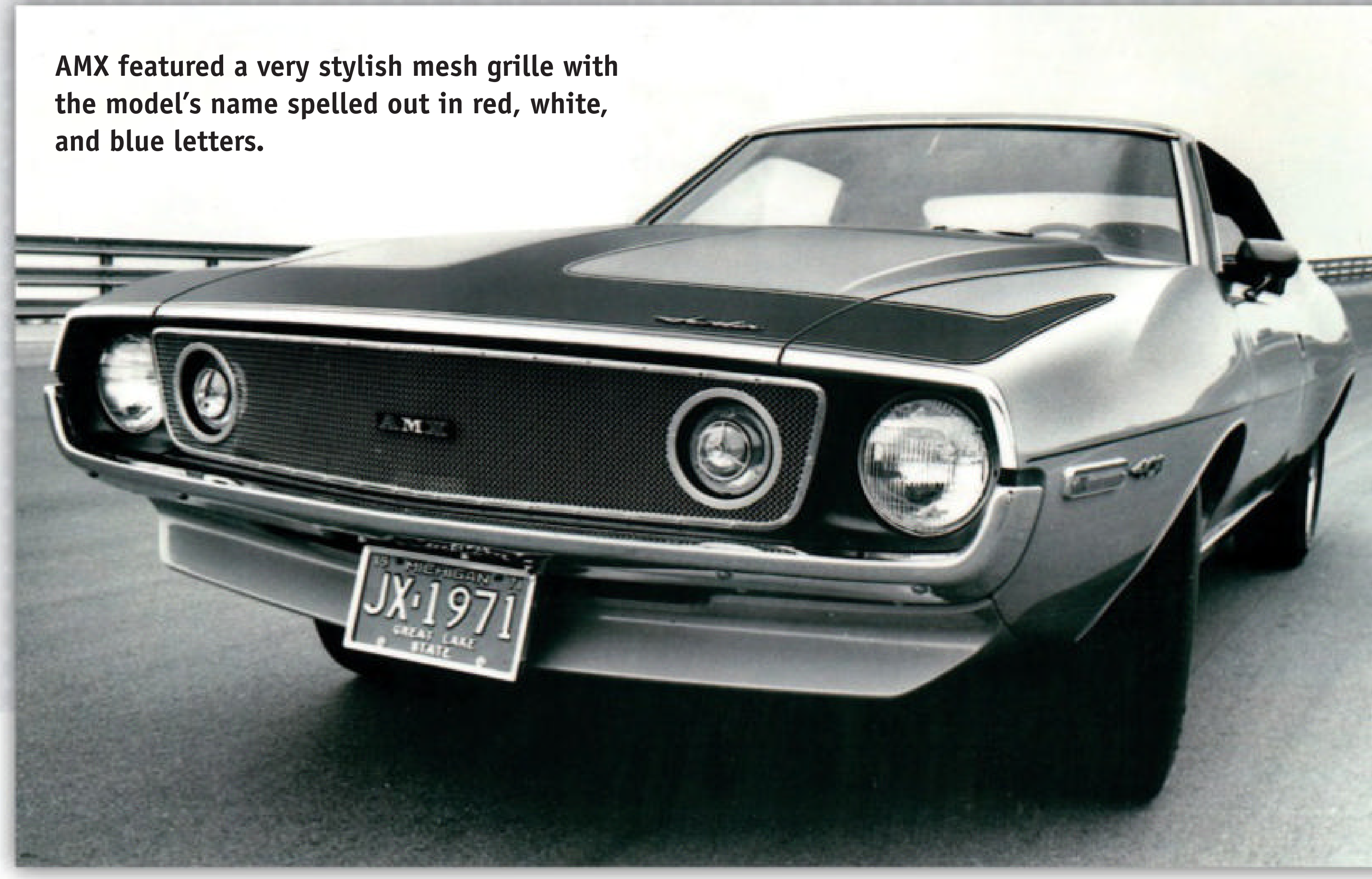
**BY PATRICK FOSTER** • PHOTOGRAPHY FROM THE AUTHOR'S COLLECTION

After nearly going out of business in 1967, American Motors replaced its company chairman with Roy D. Chapin, Jr., son of one of the founders of the Hudson Motor Car Company. Chapin quickly launched a turnaround effort focused on introducing all new cars. Among the most important of those vehicles was the Javelin, not just because it would provide additional sales volume, but because Chapin hoped it would begin a sea-change in AMC's public image.

Introduced for 1968, Javelin was successful on both counts, selling well and bringing in new, younger buyers. It was freshened and updated the next two years, but for '71 it was time for the company to devise a more contemporary design. AMC was short of cash due to the cost of launching the new Gremlin, Hornet, and soon-to-be-introduced Matador, but Chapin nevertheless tasked his Styling Department with creating a highly desirable new design, using any tricks they could to keep tooling costs down. Resourceful Dick Teague, AMC's Vice President of Styling, assigned the task of redesigning the Javelin to advanced styling studio manager Chuck Mashigan and his small team. What they accomplished was amazing.

By then, the trend within the pony car market was leaning towards bigger, beefier vehicles, so the Javelin was given a much larger appearance, though in actual dimensions it wasn't a whole lot bigger. Compared to the 1970 model, its wheelbase was one inch longer, at 110 inches, while overall length was up a mere .73 inches. Height was reduced by 1.08 inches. It was in width where the difference lay; it was increased by an impressive 3.31 inches, giving the Javelin a more aggressive-looking stance. The rear

**The AMX was no longer a separate series for 1971, instead becoming the top-of-the-line model in the Javelin series. The two-seat body was dropped, so all second-gen Javelin AMXs were equipped with four seats.**



**AMX featured a very stylish mesh grille with the model's name spelled out in red, white, and blue letters.**

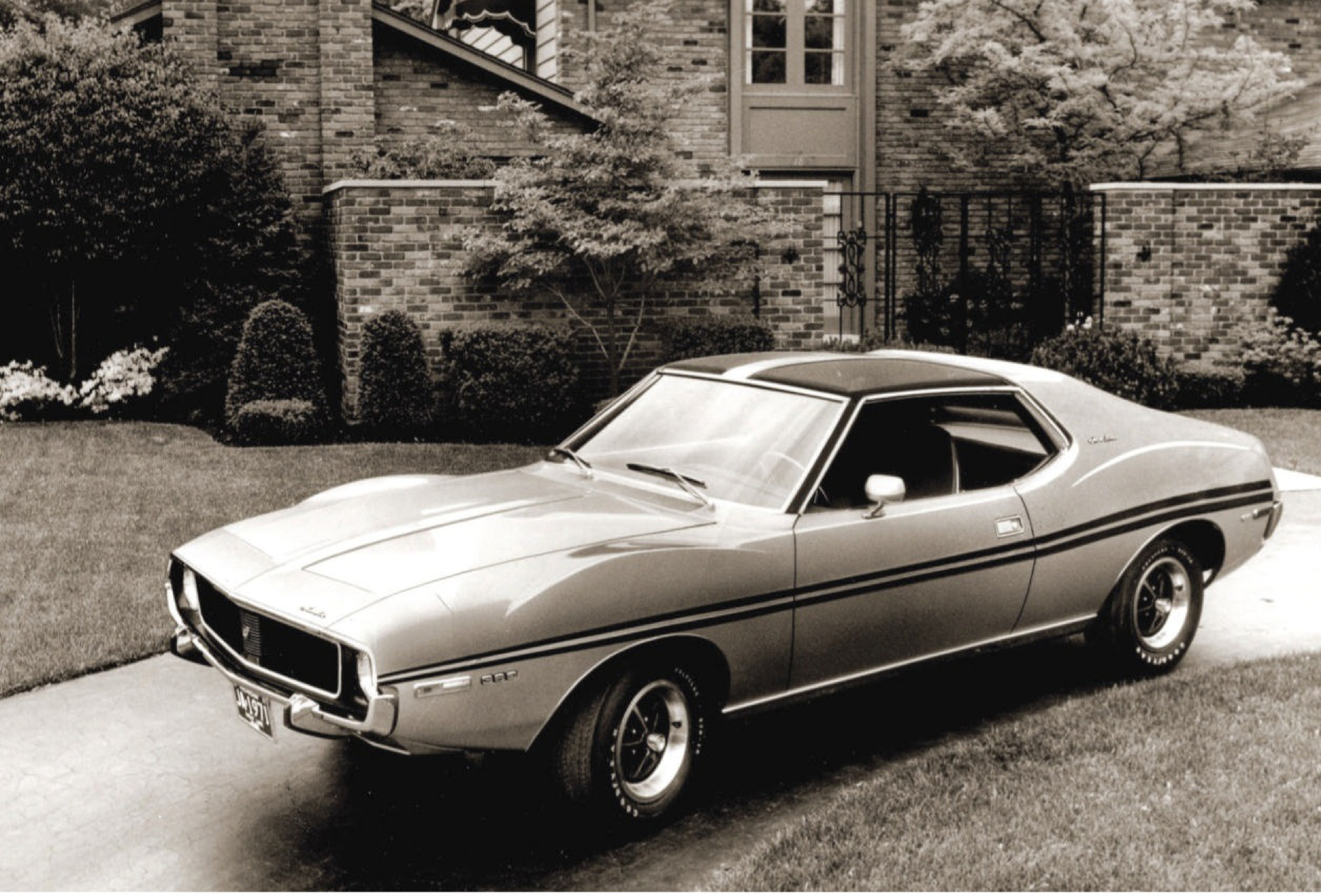
**American Motors' sporty Javelin was completely restyled for 1971. Raised front fenders and a semi-notchback roofline gave Javelin a bold new look. Shown is the base model with standard single paint stripe.**

tread was three inches greater, improving both looks and handling. Front and rear overhangs increased by about .75 and 1 inch, respectively.

But the new appearance—oh my! Chuck Mashigan gave the Javelin front fenders with bold raised blisters over the wheels, endowing it with the appearance of an expensive European exotic. The theme continued, to a lesser extent, with flared fenders over the rear wheels. The long hood gently sloped downward as it neared the front. Mashigan replaced Javelin's fastback roofline with a more contemporary semi-notchback, like the concurrent Mustang coupe, but smoother and better integrated. The roof panel featured stylish "Twin Canopy" recesses—enhanced by optional vinyl trim—and a "spoiler" rear lip. Both added to the Euro-feel.

Up front was a new recessed "silver-line" grille, save for a bulge in the center that carried a bullseye badge. The AMX got a more elaborate wire mesh grille with AMX letters in the middle, flanked by simulated driving lamps that functioned as turn signals. A raised-profile hood was unique to the AMX. The decklid on both models was the same one used on the previous Javelin/AMX, which was a clever cost-saving trick.

Three distinct models were offered: the Javelin ($2,879), the Javelin SST ($2,999), and the Javelin AMX ($3,432), all of them four-seaters. William Luneburg, AMC's irascible president, had complained



**Roof panels on 1971 Javelin and Javelin AMXs featured two recesses for a "twin canopy" look. These could be fitted with optional vinyl trim for an even sportier impression.**

that separate bodies for the previous four-seat Javelin and two-seat AMX made his plant less efficient, so for the new series the AMX shared the Javelin body but remained the top-of-the-line performance version. There was not, as many enthusiasts insist, an optional "AMX Package"—the Javelin AMX was one model within the series.

The base Javelin's standard features included high-back vinyl bucket seats in a choice of four colors, a custom steering wheel, molded door panels with molded-in armrests, body-side pinstripes, nylon-pile carpeting, a cigarette lighter, a day/night rearview mirror, a locking glove box, and backup lamps. There was bright trim around the windshield and rear window, as well as bright hubcaps.

Inside was a stylish, cockpit-style instrument panel that wrapped around the driver's area. Instruments and controls were neatly positioned for the driver, with toggle switches for lamps and wipers. The panel's center section contained HVAC controls and an ashtray.

Javelin SSTs wore fancier exterior trim: bright drip rail and lower window opening moldings, bright lower sill panel and wheel opening moldings, full wheel covers, and SST letters on the lower quarter panel. Interior upgrades included a "rim blow" sports steering wheel and a burled-walnut-woodgrain instrument panel trim with an assist handle on the passenger side. There were also ashtrays in the rear trim panels, bright pedal moldings, and upscale pleated-vinyl upholstery.

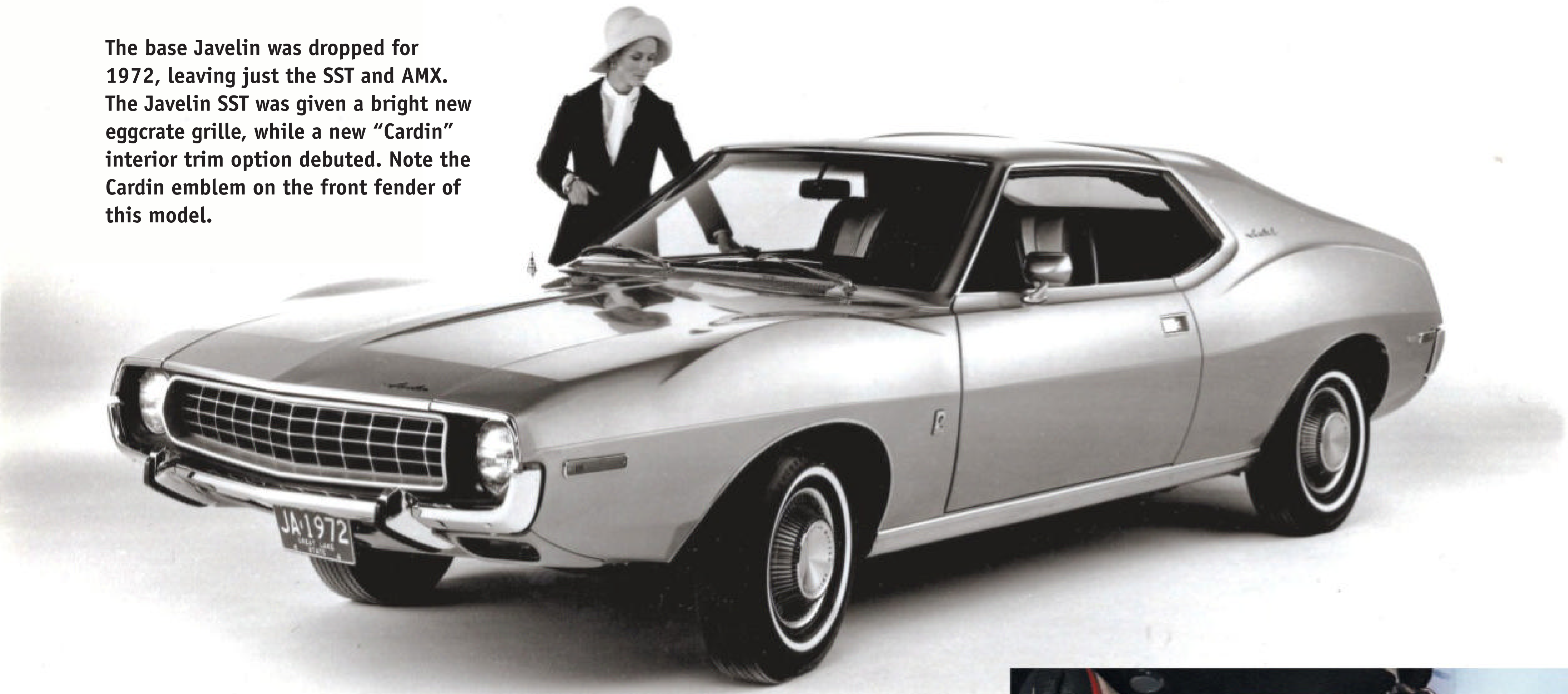
Standard AMX equipment included a rear spoiler, dual outside mirrors, engine-turned instrument panel trim, a sports console, 14 x 6-inch spoke-style wheels, a heavy-duty clutch, and a clock. An interesting option for all Javelins was the Rally-Pack instrument group that included a combination clock and tachometer dubbed—what else?—the "Tick-Tach."

Base Javelin and SST models were equipped with AMC's silky smooth seven-main-bearing 232-cu.in. straight-six that produced 135 hp. Optional on both models was a larger 258-cu.in. six rated for 150 hp, a 210-hp two-barrel 304 V-8, and a 245-hp two-barrel 360-cu.in. that was standard on the AMX. Optional for all models was a four-barrel 360 (285 hp) and a new 401-cu.in. V-8 that pumped out 330 hp. A three-speed manual transmission was standard on all models.

Six-cylinder Javelins came with C78-14 black Fiberglas-belted tires, while V-8 models got D78-14 rubber. AMX was treated to E70-14 Fiberglas-belted tires with raised white letters (RWL). The base Javelin and SST offered C78-14 whitewalls, D78- and E78-14 black or whitewalls, and the E70-14 RWL tires as options. The only AMX tire option was E60-15 RWL tires mounted on slot-style wheels.

An AMX "Go Package" ($410.90 with the 360 four-barrel, $498.95 with the 401) added a more potent V-8 with dual exhausts, cowl-air induction, heavy-duty cooling, a hood "T-stripe" decal, a black rear panel, Rally-Pac instruments, the Handling Package, the Twin-Grip rear axle, power front disc brakes, E60-15 RWL tires on styled steel wheels, a space-saver spare tire, and more.

AMC built 27,554 Javelins for the 1971 model year, though some sources



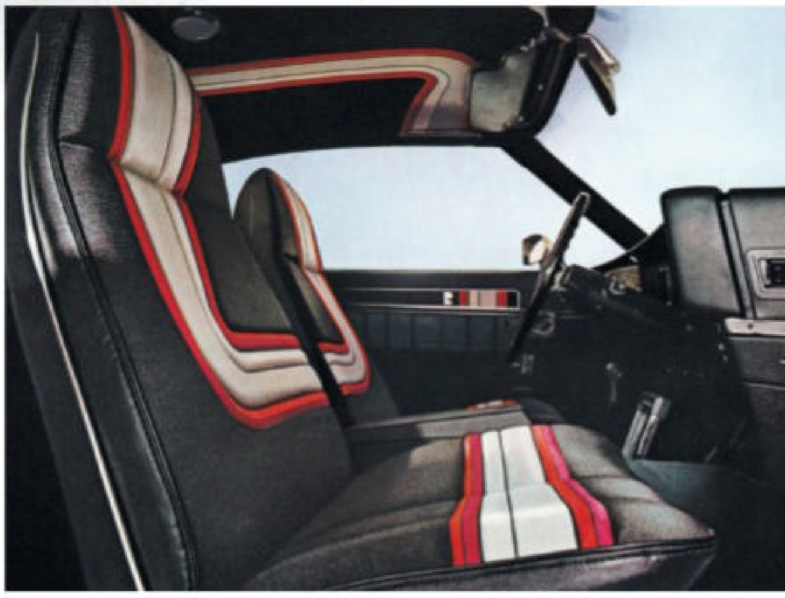
**The base Javelin was dropped for 1972, leaving just the SST and AMX. The Javelin SST was given a bright new eggcrate grille, while a new "Cardin" interior trim option debuted. Note the Cardin emblem on the front fender of this model.**

claim a slightly lower number. That total included 2,054 AMXs.

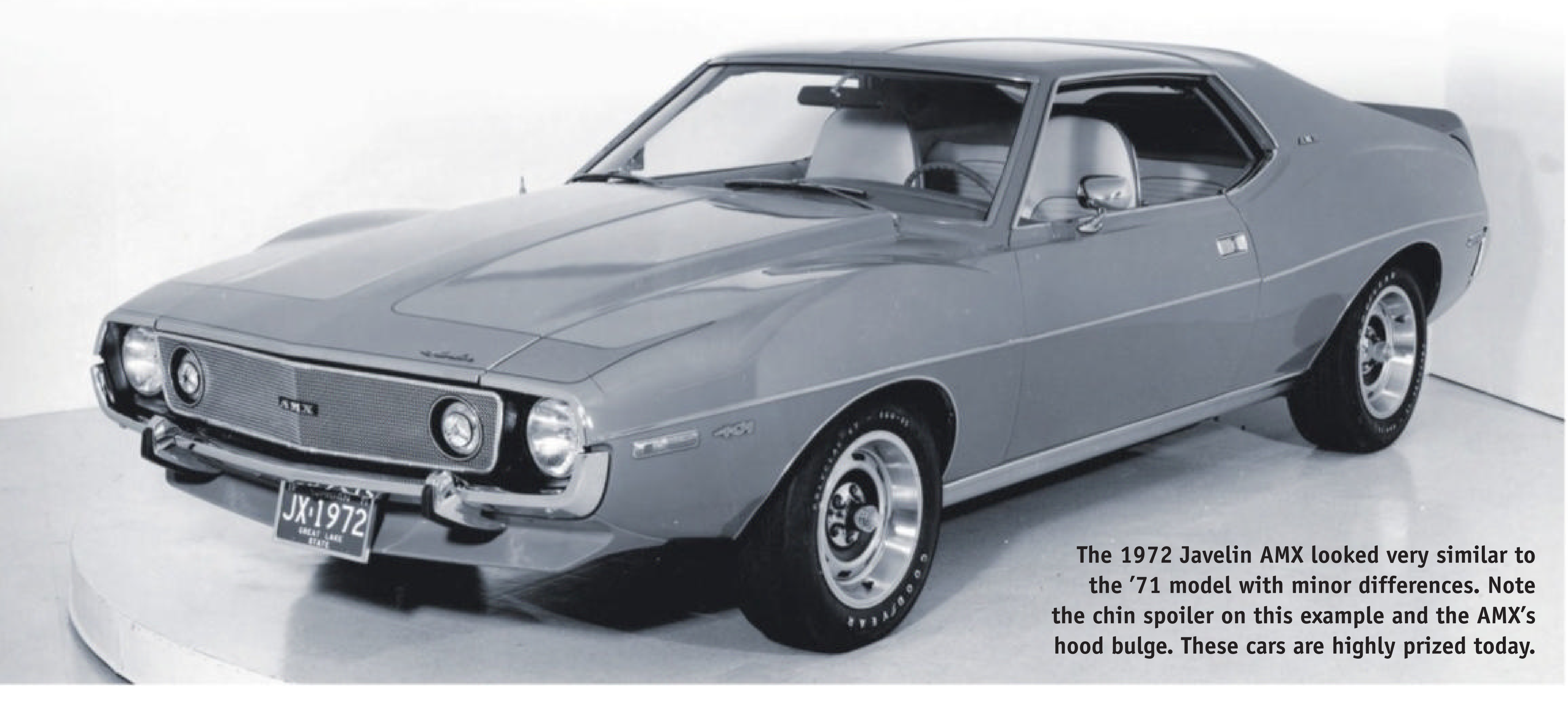
There were several minor changes made for 1972. The base Javelin was dropped, leaving the $2,807 SST and $3,109 AMX as the only models in the lineup. SSTs got a bright new eggcrate grille, while AMX retained its trademark mesh grille. This was the year the industry switched to net horsepower ratings for all passenger car engines, so the base 232 six was now rated at an even 100 hp. Making things look worse, AMC downgraded the standard AMX engine to a 304 four-barrel V-8, now net-rated at 150 hp. The optional two- and four-barrel versions of the 360 V-8 were rated at 175 hp and 195 hp respectively, while the 401 was rated at 255 hp.

There was a sharp new Pierre Cardin-designed interior option for the SST. It was priced at a bargain ($84.95); included were wildly striped seats with the pattern echoed on the door trim and headliner. A Cardin badge graced front fenders. There was also a special run of 100 Javelin "Police Interceptors" built for the Alabama State Police. All were equipped with the 401 V-8.

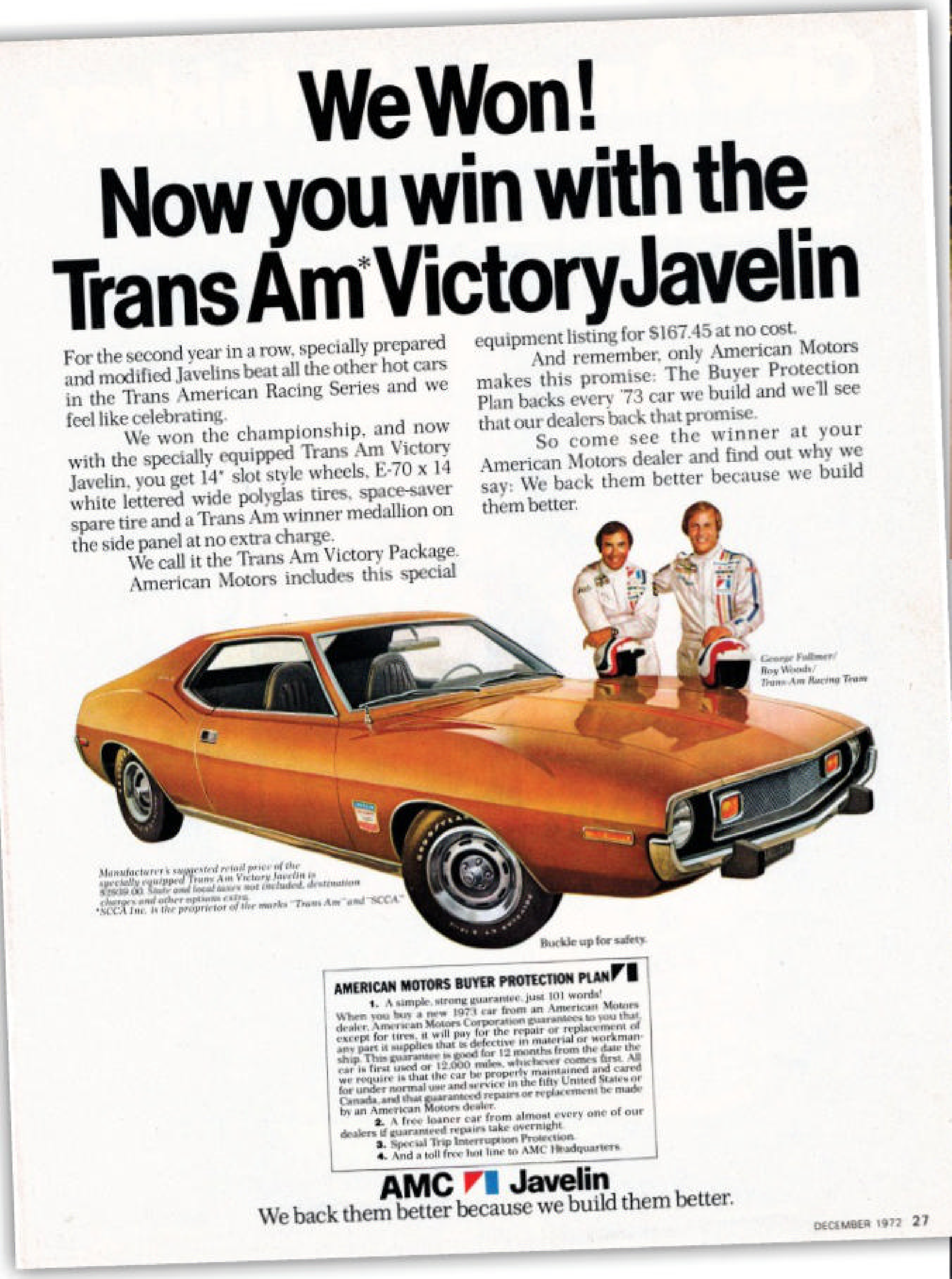
According to AMC, a total of 27,176 Javelins were produced for the 1972 model year. Of those, 3,220 were AMXs.



**The Cardin interior was wild, with bold stripes on the seats and headliner, as well as striped trim on the door panels.**



**The 1972 Javelin AMX looked very similar to the '71 model with minor differences. Note the chin spoiler on this example and the AMX's hood bulge. These cars are highly prized today.**



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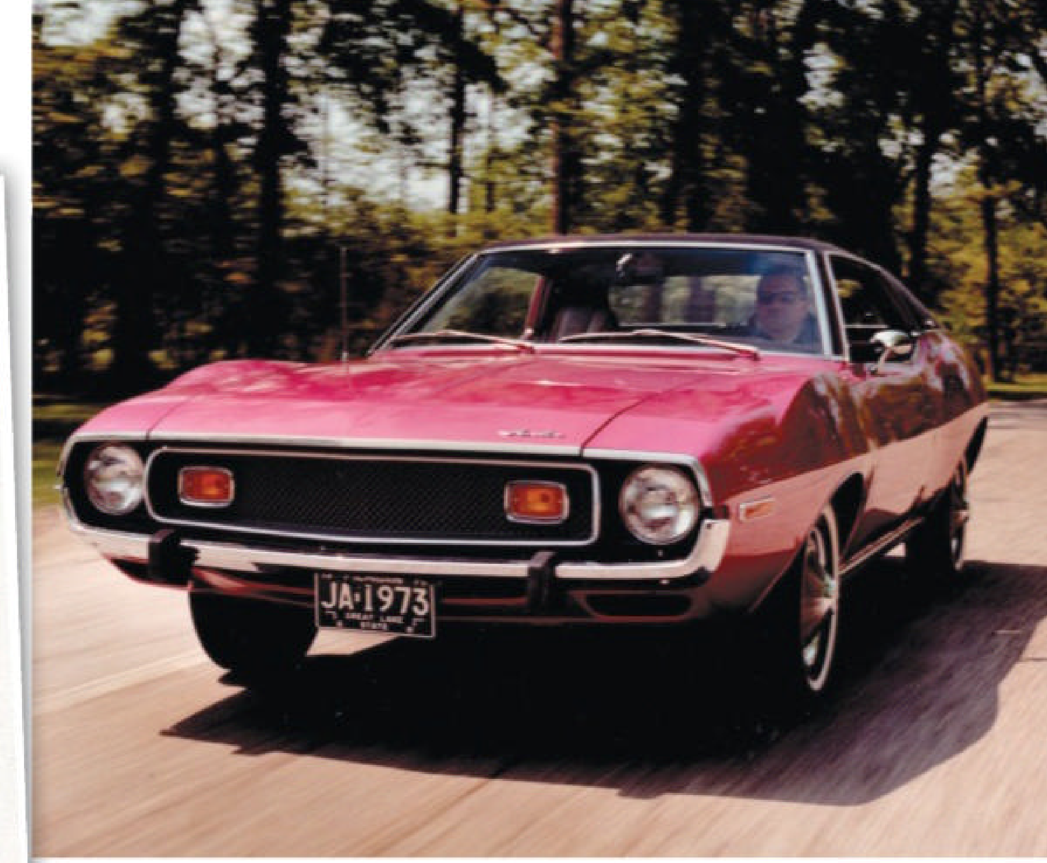
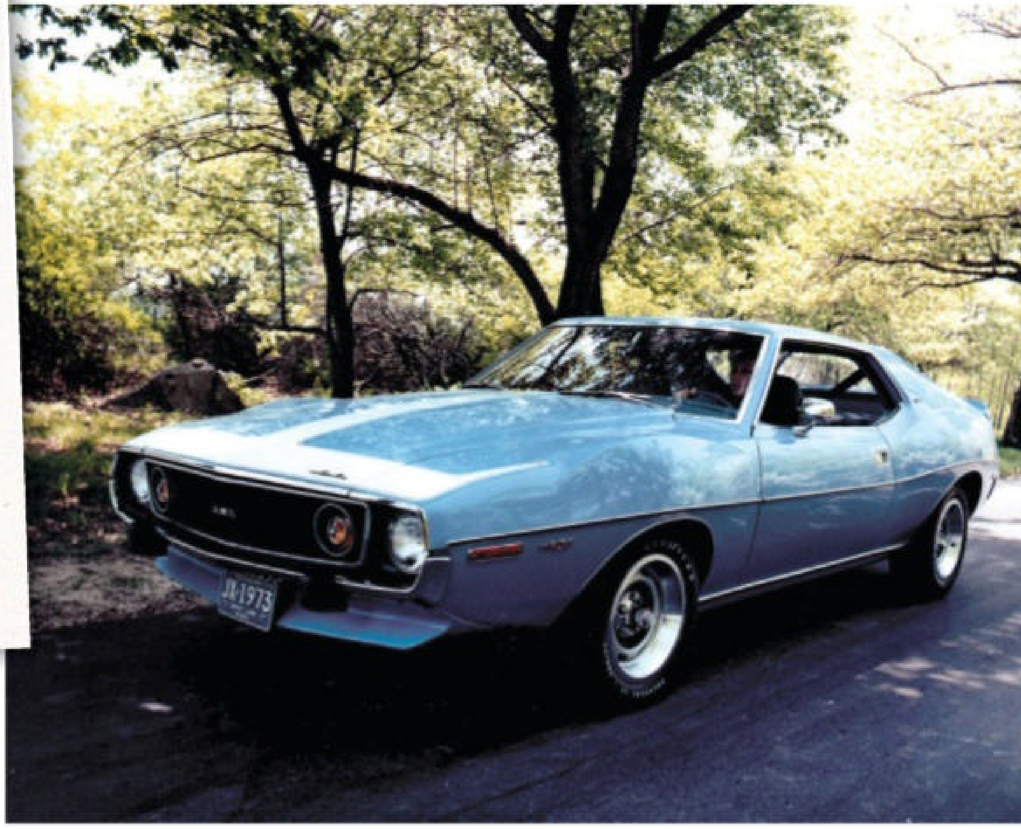
To celebrate its two years of manufacture championships in SCCA's Trans-American racing, AMC offered the special "Trans Am Victory" Javelin, which included standard slot-style wheels, E-70 x 14 raised white letter tires, a space-saver spare, and a Trans Am Winner front fender decal.



Javelin was given a sharp new mesh grille for 1973 along with interior upgrades that included slim-shell bucket seats that provided greater knee and leg room in the rear seat, and a new "soft-feel" color-keyed horn bar on the SST.



For 1973 the roof panel on both models was smoothed out, removing the twin canopy recesses. Sharp new twin-pod taillamps replaced the former full-width units. Shown here is the Javelin AMX.

The 1973 models saw more changes and improvements. The SST designation was dropped, leaving Javelin and Javelin AMX as the two models with newly smoothed roof panels, eliminating the twin canopy recesses. In turn, the optional vinyl top now covered the entire roof and pillars, and sharp new "twin pod" taillamps replaced the former full-width units. In a nod to growing safety concerns, all Javelins received strengthened front and rear bumpers with steel-reinforced guards. Base models also got a new grille somewhat like the AMX, though not as aggressive-looking. Eleven new body colors debuted, along with a sporty full-length rally-stripe option.

Inside were stylish new slim-shell bucket seats that provided greater knee and leg room in the rear seat, a new "soft-feel" color-keyed horn bar, and an improved optional AM/FM radio.

AMC offered a special Javelin "Trans Am Victory" model midyear, in recognition of its incredible 1972 SCCA Trans-Am championship. It consisted of E70-14 white-letter Polyglas tires on slot-style wheels, a space-saver spare tire, and a "Trans Am Victory" decal on the front fender, all at no charge.

In the hot new-car market of 1973, AMC produced 27,536 Javelins and Javelin AMXs. According to the *Encyclopedia of American Cars*, 4,635 were AMXs. Several sources provide widely different numbers; presented here is what we feel to be the best estimate.

For its final year, 1974, the Javelin and Javelin AMX were given upgraded front and rear bumper systems to meet the new 5-mph Federal impact standards. A new optional heavy-duty bumper system was available, and was required in California, Georgia, Maryland, and North Carolina. There was a new hub-cap-and-

There was little appearance change in the 1974 Javelin and Javelin AMX. Both received upgraded front and rear bumper systems to meet the new 5-mph Federal impact standards. An optional heavy-duty bumper system was required in California, Georgia, Maryland, and North Carolina.

trim-rings option that replaced the custom wheel cover option. For some reason the AMX front spoiler option was cancelled.

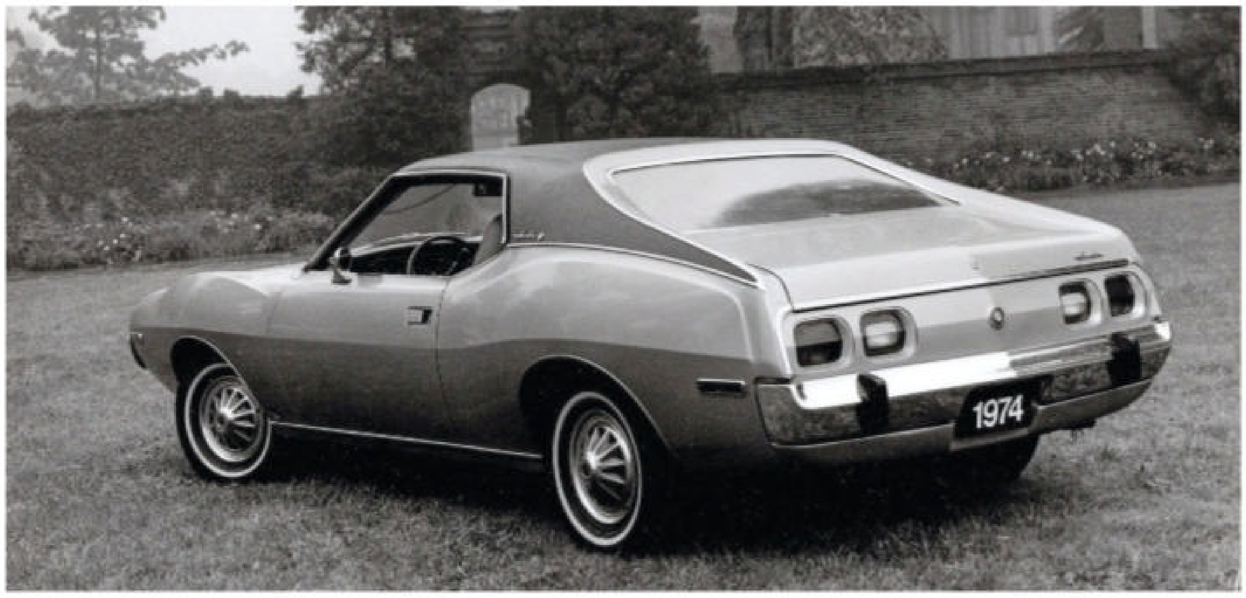
Because of the new Federal regulations, a three-point lap and shoulder belt system debuted, with an ignition interlock that everyone hated. It prevented the car from starting until the driver and passengers were fully buckled in their seats. The intended safety feature incited blowback from the public, prompting the Feds to repeal the interlock law.

The Cardin trim was dropped, as was the center cushion with armrest option. Front bucket seats were given more padding to improve comfort. In a nod to safety, front disc brakes became standard equipment; power front discs were optional. Standard tires on the AMX were F70-14 RWL tires, and steel-belted radial plies were a new option on all models. Exhaust valve seats were induction-hardened for longer life in V-8 engines, and all AMC engines were now able to use regular, low-lead, and no-lead fuel.

The pony car market was noticeably shrinking, but for 1974 the "second-gen" Javelin line turned in its best year with 29,536 cars produced. Reportedly, 4,980 were AMXs. Here again, resources vary on the total number, though most agree on the number of AMXs.

That ended production of the Javelin forever. AMC would resurrect the AMX name in 1977 as the Hornet AMX, and the following year simply as the AMX (sometimes referred to by enthusiasts as the "Concord AMX" because it used the Concord hatchback), and finally for '79 and '80 as the AMX on the Spirit Liftback.

Even in its fourth year of production the Javelin AMX remained a very exciting machine with bold and exciting style and great performance.



Shown is a 1974 Javelin with the optional full-vinyl top. First introduced in the 1973 model year, it covered the entire roof panel, extended onto the sail panels, and swept down to the rear fenders. Note the twin-pod taillamps.

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FIREBIRD

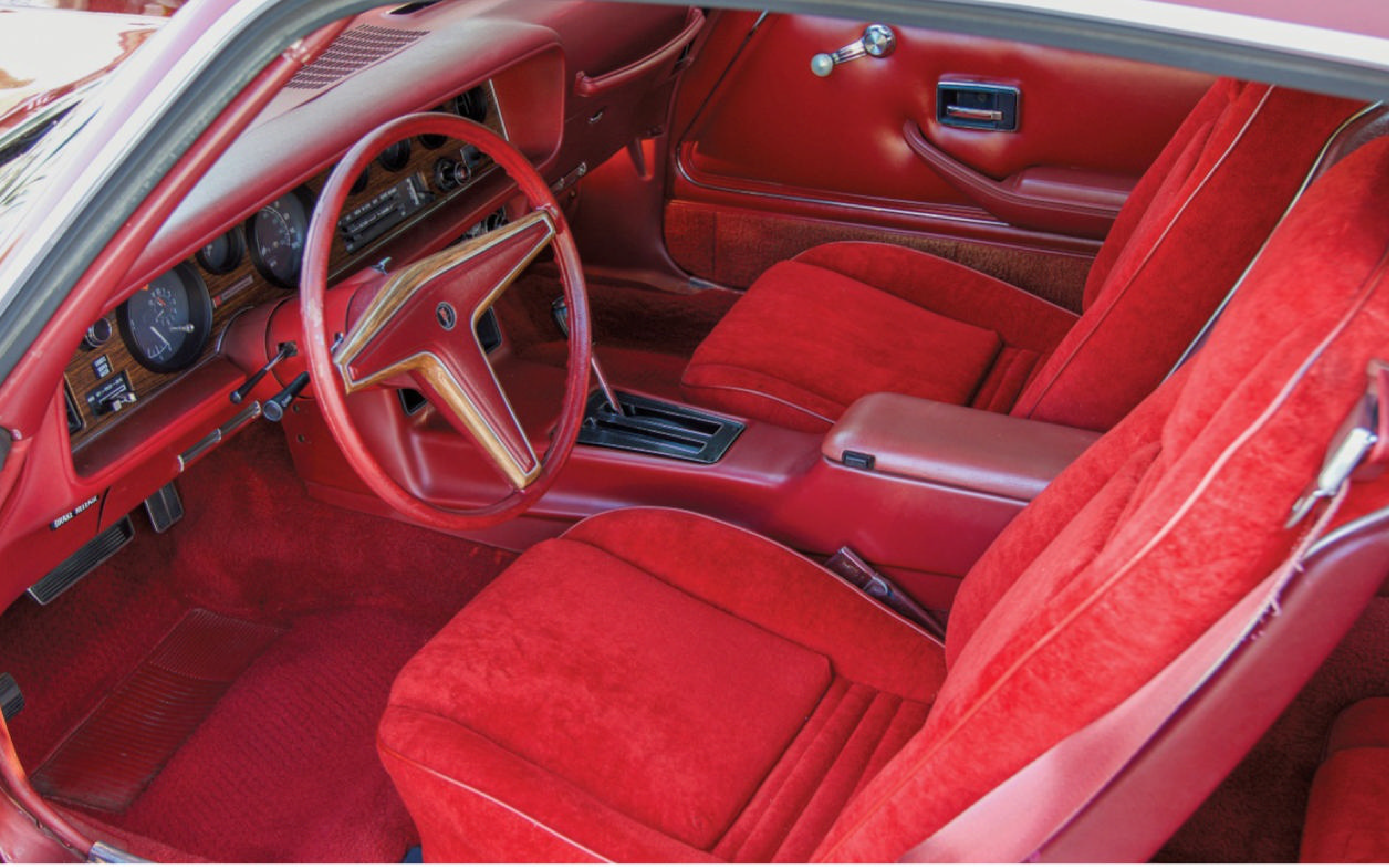
# What **Excite Meant**

*This '78 Pontiac Firebird Esprit has survived more than a quarter-million miles without mechanical refurbishment*

WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY JEFF KOCH

Then and now, Pontiac's second-generation Firebird occupied a strange spot in the car world. Mind you, we're not talking about the spatted, stickered, and spoilered Trans Am; its place is known and secure. After the summer of 1977 and Hal Needham's good-ol'-boy *Smokey and the Bandit* saga, America suddenly remembered that the Trans Am was the closest thing this country still had to a muscle car—and in between the fuel crises, that shot T/A sales up 35 percent year-to-year.

No, we mean the non-T/A chunk of Pontiac's F-body lineup, consisting of Firebird, Esprit, and Formula. An Esprit (pronounced uh-SPREE, not EE-sprit—French for "spirit") may have been pretty, and may have shared DNA with the beefier Trans Am, but it wasn't a showy peacock of a car, a corner-carving terror, or tire-smoking recalcitrant. There was no secret life beneath that long nose or behind that new-for-1977 split-grille beak. Nor did it have the bones of something with greater potential, or the raw material for a hot-rodder to mess around with. (Why would Jim Rockford, arguably the world's most famous Esprit pilot, drive a car that drew attention to itself?) A Firebird Esprit was simply, in the parlance of the day, "a nice car." Looked a little sporty, felt a little plush. But in a division that had Venturas,

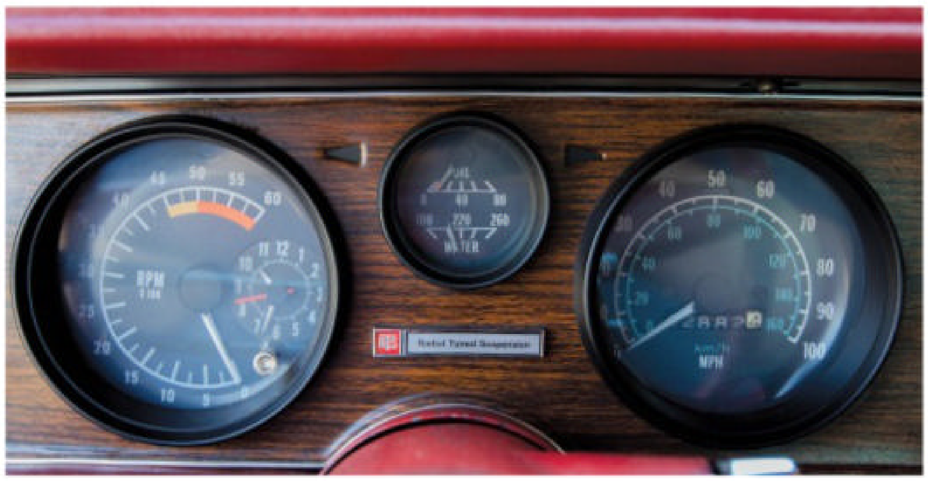


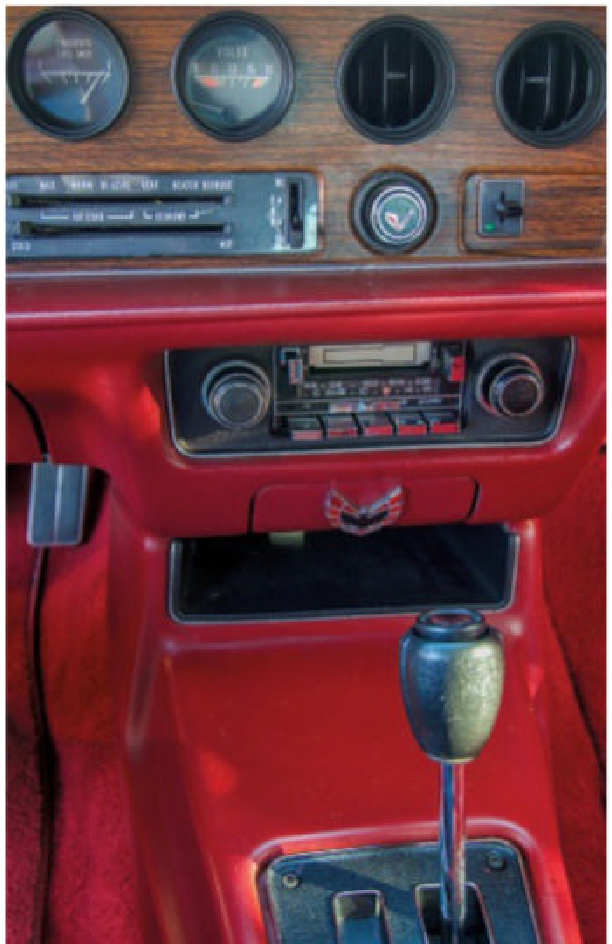
Grands Prix, Le Mans, Grands Am, Bonnevilles, and Catalinas, all of which offered two-door versions and any of which could fill the division's personal-luxury-car quota... what sense did the Firebird Esprit make?

Consider: Pontiac painted itself as the "excitement" division of GM, and while the Trans Am (and even the Formula) may have bullseyed the target, the Esprit... well, how do you define excitement? Esprit was "The Firebird with luxury," according to the 1978 brochure, although with a shape like that you could be easily convinced that any Firebird was infused with sporting moves. Esprit's luxury touches included (mostly) bright and body-colored trim: all-vinyl buckets; added interior grab handles on the doors and dash; added sound deadening; rear ash trays; color-keyed "luxury cushion steering wheel" and outer door-handle inserts; brightwork on the pedals; body-colored sport mirrors with left-hand remote; bright moldings on the roof, windowsills, hood, rocker panels and wheel openings; and deluxe wheel covers. That's $304 more than a base Firebird cost. Do rear ash trays, chrome trim, and grab handles excite you?

It's unclear whether the buying public at large was convinced either. In 1978, a year when Pontiac sold 187,000 Firebirds (a solid 20-percent gain year-to-year across the whole Firebird line, with base, Esprit, Formula and Trans Am models all benefitting from a sales boost), nearly half were Trans Ams. Had Pontiac convinced another 300 buyers out of Esprits and Formulas and into a T/A, the numbers would have been half Trans Am, and half everything else combined.

Today, four-and-a-half decades on, Trans Ams are getting all of the attention. The chasm between Esprit and Trans Am seems even greater, both on the secondary market and at auctions nationwide. Trans Ams are seemingly everywhere. Where are you going to find an Esprit (besides, perhaps, in pieces under a





**The Carmine interior is full of options, including velour seating, a console for the floor-shifted automatic, color-keyed seat belts, extra grab handles, and a set of gauges that you'd expect to see in a Trans Am rather than an Esprit. This no-radio model was given a period AM/FM cassette unit shortly after the current owner took possession.**

restored T/A)? The Esprit is considerably more rare than the performance variant, but certainly not price-guide valued up there with the far more common Trans Ams. Yet consider: For every five Trans Ams in '78, Pontiac built just two Esprits.

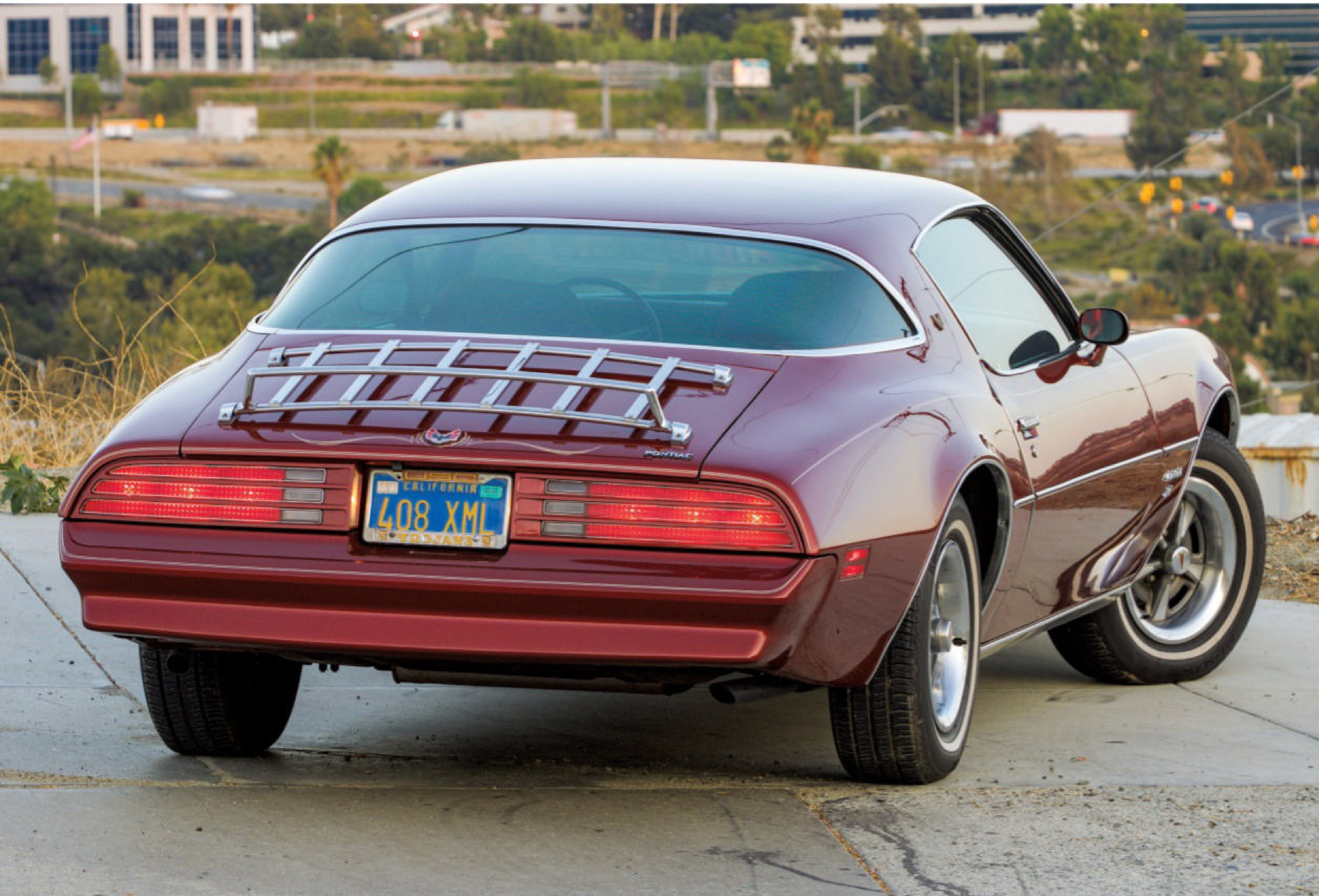
Lucky is the owner who cares not for value because his car isn't going anywhere. Bob Lane of Yorba Linda, California, didn't have to go searching for his '78 Firebird Esprit because it found him — all the way back in 1979. Bob was commuting round-trip more than 40 miles a day to USC and home again in the late 1970s, *en route* to his law degree, and discovered that his econo-car ride had a terrible habit of melting its engine at regular intervals.

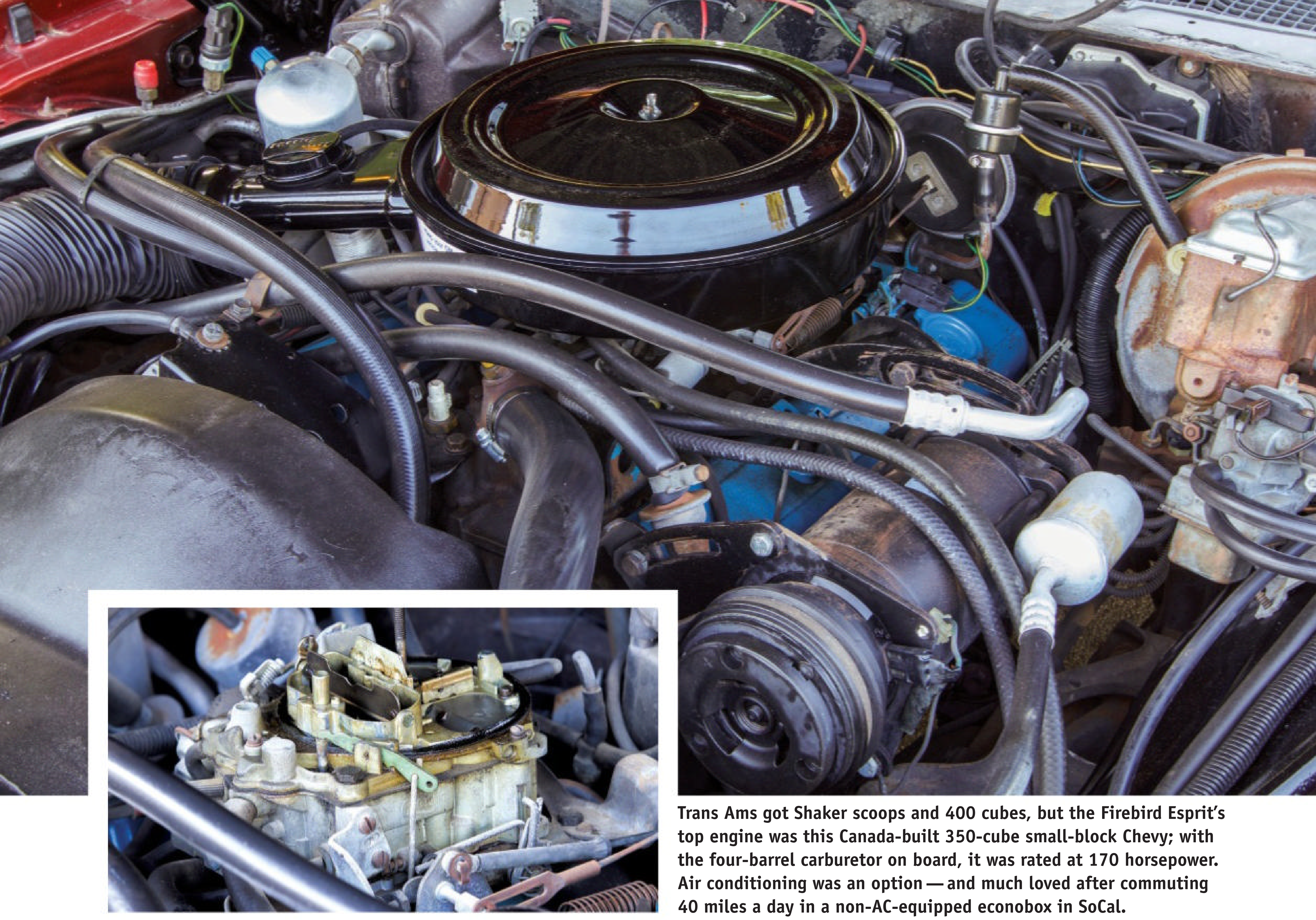
"My dad was a directional driller in the oil fields around Los Angeles, and a co-worker on the rig in Culver City, California, had purchased this Firebird Esprit new in Ohio in June of '78; after he brought it to California, he decided to sell it," Bob says. His dad knew young Bob needed a better ride, and this Esprit was it. Visions of banzai missions for cases of Coors Light danced in Bob's young head, and when presented with the very Esprit you see here, he was elated. "My previous car was manual, with no air conditioning and plenty of mechanical issues. This Firebird was perfect for me — 6,500 miles on the odometer and only a small dent on the B-pillar from when it was hit with a baseball."

As with any American car of the era, Firebirds of any flavor could be optioned to the hilt, and this one was loaded to its wingtips. A Van Nuys-built car that was sold new in Ohio (something of a mystery, since the Lordstown plant that also built F-bodies was right there in the state), it was built with air conditioning, automatic transmission, and the top Esprit engine. It was equipped with the top Esprit engine option, the 170-net-horsepower, four-barrel Chevy 350 — an engine that was called out as a Chevy engine on the Monroney, and a considerable step-up from the standard two-barrel 3.8-liter Buick V-6. Those three options alone added $1,111 to the bottom line.

> *I love the sound of the Turbo 350 as it accelerates— so distinctive. It's a joy to drive.*

Then there were also all of the items that made this Esprit the proverbial "nice car:" body side moldings and door-edge guards, whitewall tires on Rally II wheels, the Velour custom trim group, console, seatbelts that were color-keyed to the Carmine interior, cruise control, remote trunk release, time-delayed wipers, rear defroster, Rally gauges with tach, tinted glass, $18





**Trans Ams got Shaker scoops and 400 cubes, but the Firebird Esprit's top engine was this Canada-built 350-cube small-block Chevy; with the four-barrel carburetor on board, it was rated at 170 horsepower. Air conditioning was an option — and much loved after commuting 40 miles a day in a non-AC-equipped econobox in SoCal.**

worth of additional insulation above and beyond what the Esprit already received, the Lamp Group, floor mats, a $5 vanity mirror in the passenger's-side sun visor, a heavy-duty radiator, and power front disc brakes. Add in the freight charge and that $4,896.95 Esprit suddenly ballooned up to $7,176 and change. All that money... and no radio! That's right, whether by default or design (and with all of that extra sound deadener, we'd suggest design) this was aiming to be the quietest second-gen F-body that ever rolled out of Van Nuys. Bob would soon add an NOS AM/FM cassette deck, rear louvers (since removed after being crushed by a fallen palm tree, though a replacement set is ready to be installed) and a chrome rack on the Esprit's trunk lid.

Despite Bob's Bandit dreams, he fought his hotfoot desires and kept his Esprit true to what it was: He never pretended it was a Trans Am. He didn't challenge every hot Mustang at the stop lights. He didn't power-brake and smoke the whitewalls at any opportunity. Even in his youth, Bob drove responsibly, as you might hope he would, having been given a gift of the Esprit's magnitude. And Bob's reward, over 40-odd years of ownership, has been a quarter-million-plus miles of reliable driving. That's right, the powertrain has never needed to be rebuilt. "It's gone 256,000," he admits, "and probably another 5,000 or 6,000 since the odometer cable stopped working. I really like the looks, the color, and the power" of the car he has called "Birdy" for decades — "but what I really like is how reliable it has been for me. It's just a wonderful car that now has 262,000 miles on the original engine. I love the sound of the Turbo 350 as it accelerates — so distinctive. It's a joy to drive."

It's not been without incident: A friend borrowed it twenty years ago and managed to get into a traffic accident with it, necessitating body repairs and a repaint in the original Carmine hue. The pinstriping was added a decade later — something that Bob confesses he probably wouldn't do again.

And so, maybe a crushed-velour interior and extra sound deadening isn't your idea of excitement. How about a quarter-million miles of faithful service, without so much as a rebuild, stretching across six decades? It's probably this Firebird Esprit's saving grace that it wasn't built in such a way that its owner was tempted to explore the limits of its capabilities. Steady drivability without having to break out a set of wrenches, and the lifetime of memories that goes with it, sounds plenty exciting to us.

Firebird
Esprit

PONTIAC
1978
CALIFORNIA
408 XML
FIREBIRD

DODGE
Job-Rated

# A Friend Indeed

## *From an affiliated dealership, this 1952 Dodge B-3-B spent a lifetime doing chores for Quakers*

**BY JIM DONNELLY** • PHOTOGRAPHY BY DAVID CONWILL

Philadelphia, and much of the surrounding area, owes a sizable debt to the original William Penn. After all, he founded the place, and his likeness has stood sentinel atop City Hall for decades. Penn's legacy runs deeply through the Delaware Valley in New Jersey and Pennsylvania, both for the social order that he created and the institutions of faith that still thrive there today. The generations of Quakers who ranged across southeastern Pennsylvania, in particular, created a strong foundation of business, government and education. You can find beautifully maintained relics of the Quaker past if you know where to look. This pristine 1952 Dodge B-3-B half-ton pickup is one of them.

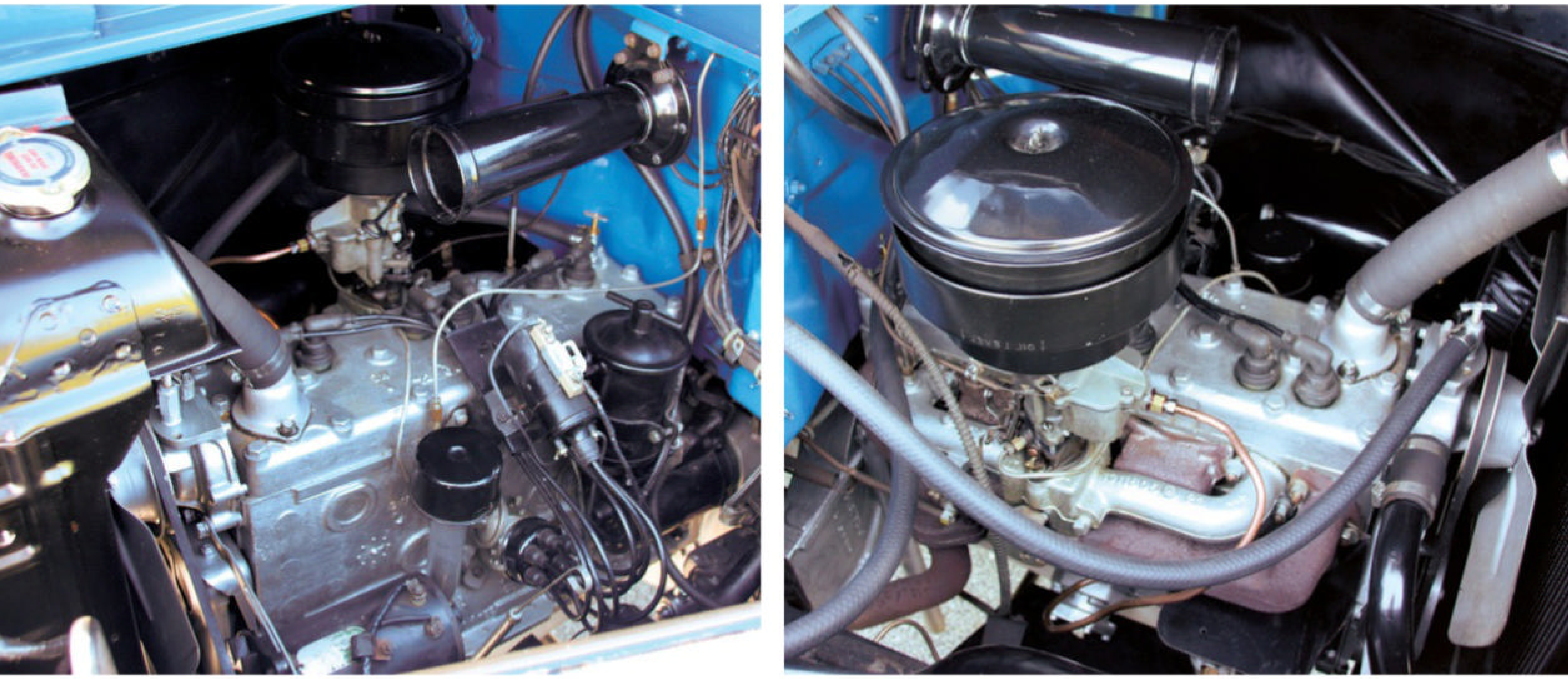
How so, you say? The two-wheel-drive truck was delivered new to Jarrett Dodge, which used to be located in Hatboro, Pennsylvania, and was owned by a relative of the truck's current owner, Hershey, Pennsylvania, resident Hank Hallowell. If you recognize the name, that's likely because another one of Hank's collectible Chrysler products, a 1973 Chrysler Town & Country station wagon in nearly new condition, recently graced these pages. Hank is a Mopar guy, and not just because of the family connection. He can remember this truck from his own days at the school where it worked.

"A few years later, it was traded back in, and at that time, Abington Friends Meeting—better known as the Quakers—was in need of a truck for their caretaker," Hank explains. "Ike Jarrett was a member of the Meeting, and took care of all of the needs of Abington Friends School, which is connected to the Meeting. At one time the School had a fleet of Dodge vans (purchased from Jarrett) used as buses for the kids. He sold this truck to the Meeting at a discounted rate, and the Meeting proceeded to use it around the property for plowing and any other caretaker needs, like tree or brush removal, or working in the cemetery."

Abington Friends Meeting—located in Abington Township, just northwest of Philadelphia—used the B-3-B from the middle of the 1950s until 1990, more or less, and the truck was never issued a Pennsylvania registration or license plate in all that time. "It was always under cover in a shed. It was never tagged, so it was never used off the Friends property, and it didn't accumulate many miles. That's how it was used. I'd say 'sparingly' would be the key word."

The postwar boomlet for light pickups was still mushrooming in the early 1950s as Dodge scrambled for sales against Ford, Chevrolet, GMC, and to a lesser extent, Studebaker. Chrysler's epiphany came when it replaced its hoary prewar lineup with the new B series, which today are best known for their "Pilot House" cab configuration. Hank's B-3-B has a conventional cab with the standard-issue windshield and three windows.

To shorten the wheelbase of the B-series trucks for greater maneuverability, Dodge took the somewhat radical step of



**Dodge's B-series pickups were assembled with a proven 218-cu.in. straight-six engine that, in the case of our featured B-3-B, boasted 95 hp and 175 lb-ft of torque. One of its selling points was a "moistureproof ignition system" that wouldn't leave truck owners stranded.**

pushing the engine forward while simultaneously moving the front axle slightly backward. The cabs were nestled atop rubber mounts, and had copious space for three adults sitting across the fixed bench seat. The cargo box was enlarged over the prewar trucks' beds, and stiffened springs boosted the B-series' load capacity.

The trucks continued to evolve during the 1950s, with the Pilot House cab jettisoned after 1953, when the more dramatically styled C-series trucks made the scene for 1954. This B-3-B typifies a later B-series pickup, being powered by the carryover L-head straight-six that displaced 218 cubic inches and was rated by the manufacturer at 95 horsepower and 175 lb-ft of torque at 1,600 rpm. Riding on a wheelbase of 108 inches, the B-3-B has a 6.5-foot cargo bed with a factory oak floor.

"Compared to Studebaker and to GMC with their Advance Design trucks, the Dodges weren't what you'd call style leaders," Hank says. "I would say Dodge had the tallest trucks. Streamlining wasn't really part of it. It says "JOB-RATED" right in the center of the grille on this truck. Their point was to make something that was tough, could survive a very long time with regular maintenance, and would provide good service. These were sold to farmers and small businesses: that was the market."

Refinished in 1952-correct (if not original to this truck) Ecuador Blue—with a black box and black running boards—the B-3-B's only upgrade from stock was the installation of Air-O-Ride seats for less jounce. Again, Hank has memories of this one that date back to his childhood. His family belongs to Abington Friends Meeting, and he recalls seeing this Dodge at work, with the caretaker behind the wheel and the B-3-B still wearing its factory paint.

"It was red, it sat under the shed, and it probably had about a half a foot of dust on it that was as old as I was," he recalls. "It ran perfectly. Started right up. I don't think it ever went out of first gear or reverse, though." Hank describes the B-3-B as "totally solid, with not a speck of rust" when he acquired it. "It never sat out," he

Job-Rated

DODGE

DODGE
JARRETT
HATBORO PA

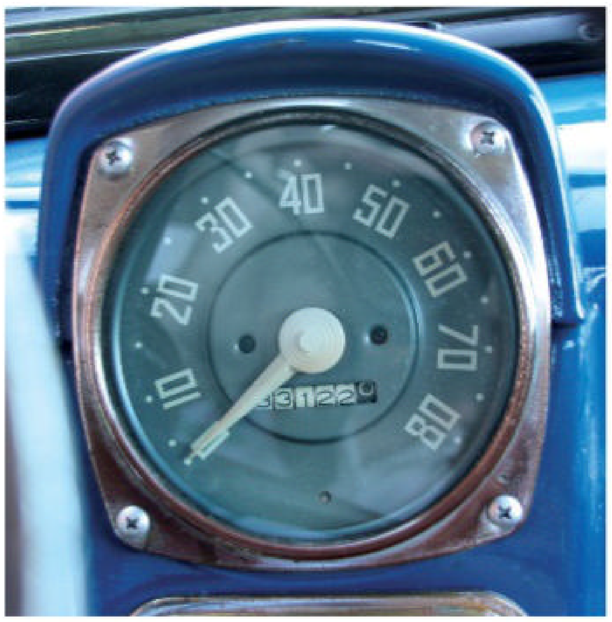
emphasizes. "It was always covered by the shed. Frankly, I don't think it was ever out in the weather once."

When the B-3-B was about to be appointed to its third caretaker, the individual objected to being assigned such an old truck. The meeting elders called Jarrett Dodge, which was then still in business, and the dealership took the old Dodge back. They then sold it to a friend of the dealer. The new owner disassembled the truck, repainted the cab in Ecuador Blue, and redid most of the other steel in black. "I would say they did a pretty respectable job," Hank recalls. "Keep in mind, it didn't need much work because it was never really used, and never really sat, and only has about 35,000 miles on it. The point is that it was used consistently, so it didn't have to be revived. A better word for what happened here would be refurbished, not restored."

From there, the B-3-B went to a farm in upstate New York, near Syracuse, where it was used only in good weather to drive to the end of the lane so the owner could grab his morning newspaper. The next owner took the Dodge to State College, Pennsylvania, where he kept it until age led him to move in with his son, and where the B-3-B was used only for the same sort of very light, very occasional service. Hank rediscovered the truck after that owner passed away, learned it was for sale, and gave it a look.

"I agreed to buy it almost immediately," he remembers. A big part of the reason the truck is so clean and solid today, he says, is that all three owners since Abington Friends Meeting have been committed Chrysler people who instantly recognized its pristine, rust-free, and little-changed condition. As it turned out, Hank had a hand, you could say, in the truck's condition from its late working life.

"I used this truck back when I was 18 or 19 years old," he says. "One of the things you came to dread there at the meeting was digging the graves, which was all done by hand. It's about a week's worth of work to get the grave ready and then backfill it, and we used the truck for that. We'd back the truck up over the open grave. Well, to do that, you'd drive down the row of graves and then set up a wooden box where you'd put all the dirt. After the burial, you'd backfill everything and then shovel the remaining dirt back up into the truck. They watched you very carefully, because they were very particular about how this process was done.



AMPS
50-0+50
OIL
0 40 80
E ½ F
FUEL

"So, after we did all that, I started up the truck and we went to move it, so we could shovel the back of the truck out. It seemed like I only moved the truck two feet forward, but instead it went much further. I heard a big 'bam,' and all of a sudden, the nose of the truck was on the ground. The front bumper was a couple of inches off the ground and the front passenger tire had disappeared. I thought I had broken an axle or something, so I called my dad, who had a Power Wagon and a chain. When he got there, he started laughing. He told me the truck had collapsed one of the old, old graves that were put in before the burials used concrete vaults. There was a wooden coffin that had rotted and collapsed under the truck. Remember, this is a Quaker cemetery where burials went back hundreds of years."

Hank now uses his truck considerably more gently, some occurring at his summer home in the Adirondack Mountains of New York. Eventually, as he recalled, a souvenir of the graveyard misadventure was corrected, decades later.

"After I purchased this truck, I took it to the shop, when one of the mechanics called me and said, 'You have to look at this tie rod.' When I got there, they told me they didn't know how anyone had been able to drive the truck, because the tie rod was bent," he says. "And I said, 'Yeah, that's from me in 1974, and nobody ever repaired it because the truck never went out of first gear.' So after 50 years, more or less, the truck's finally gotten its tie rod fixed."

"Pilot House" trucks of all type were still few-frills workhorses within the cabins. Basics instruments and a bench seat that fit a maximum of three passengers were standard, though this one includes an optional, relocated AM radio and heater. The cab design offered what was considered ample all-around vision.

DODGE
PENNSYLVANIA
PA ANTIQUE HISTORIC VEHICLE
F6XX
ANTIQUE VEHICLE

**ELMER LIIMATTA**
CHASSELL, MICHIGAN

# Elmer's Little Car

Elmer age 3 Laurium, Mich

**I GREW UP IN DETROIT, MICHIGAN.** My dad, with only a fifth-grade education, was a good mechanic and had a job at Packard Motor Company. During World War II, Packard had contract work building Rolls-Royce engines for the North American P-51 Mustang fighter planes and PT boats—over 9,000 of those engines. During that time, we rebuilt used cars since the production of new civilian vehicles had ceased. It was something we still did afterwards; believe it or not, cars were still scarce in 1949. It was a problem, as I was 17 years old and had thoughts about a car of my own.

One day, my cousin—who was "bird-doggin'," or spotting cars for dealers—came over and said, "Elmer, I have a car for you." That Sunday afternoon we went to his house, which was about 10 miles away. There sat a 1934 Ford Victoria. It was hard to miss with that front end, and it had doors that opened from the front. The car had been used as a paint truck by a previous owner and it had big hooks on the left side that were used to hold ladders between jobs. Someone had made a wood floor in the back that covered the factory recessed floor.

The Ford looked good, but it was tired. I was able to buy it for $50. When I drove it home there was a cloud of blue smoke billowing from the exhaust. Its engine had used all the oil by the time I got home. During lunch that Monday I took three buddies for a ride. Unfortunately, it didn't last long: The engine stalled, and it was so worn it would not start. We pushed it home.

The solution was to rebuild the engine. While we were at it, we made our own dual exhaust system using 1 ½-inch diameter flexible tubing. My Ford had a nice snap to it. Later, I put two Smithy mufflers on it. Now that it sounded good, it needed to look good. We found a pair of doors at Ford Salvage over in Highland Park and bought a can of metallic blue paint. My dad took the compressor from an old refrigerator, found an old Army-surplus air tank, and put them together to create his own air compressor. To make it portable, he made a little cart with casters. It worked well enough that we painted the Ford's spoked 17-inch wheels yellow.

That summer a friend and I made a 1,500-mile trip to northern Michigan to visit our grandparents. When I went over 49 mph, water would squirt out from under the radiator cap; my friend suggested that my mother arranged for that to happen. During one trip, I was pulled over in Hancock, Michigan, and given a ticket for illegal horn blowing. I had a wolf whistle mounted on the intake manifold; the vacuum operated the whistle when I hit the switch. The fine cost me $4.25, plus $1 in court costs. I borrowed the money from my grandmother. I picked up three girlfriends that summer, too, one of whom called it, "Elmer's little car." One eventually

worked for—and retired from—Dodge Truck, where she ran a paint computer in Warren, Michigan. Ford said the Victoria was a four-passenger car, but I was able to pack six or seven friends into it.

After a few months I sold my Ford for $275, because we were building a new house and my dad needed money to help secure a mortgage. I was eventually able to buy a 1935 Ford Fordor for $100. I blew a couple of engines while I owned it, maybe because I loved to wind it up in second gear. I miss the three-on-the-floor. After a while I could pull the engine in 45 minutes.

Today I'm still into these cars. I'm currently building a 1932 Ford with '35 Ford wheels, the only year they had 16-inch, 30-spoke steel wheels. I just need a Brookville pickup roadster body to go with the chassis.

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# RM Sotheby's Hershey 2022 Sale

## *Automotive icons and automobilia deliver a $10.5 million result*

**PART OF THE AACA EASTERN FALL MEET'S LEGACY IN HERSHEY,** Pennsylvania, has been a collector car auction, the last 16 of which have been hosted by RM Sotheby's at the Hershey Lodge. Aptly billed as The Hershey Auction, the 2022 dates were the evenings of October 5-6, preceded by an opening barbeque-style preview dinner. Supported by 86 automobilia lots, the auction featured 129 vehicular lots, 59 percent of which originated from the prewar era. Postwar era enthusiasts were delighted, too: 38 percent of the lots dated from 1949-'69.

Prewar cars traditionally sell big here, and 2022 was no exception. Jumping to the top of the overall sales list was a rare 1930 Cadillac V-16 Sport Phaeton with coachwork by Fleetwood that sold for $880,000. Next was an equally rare 1914 Thomas Model K-6-90 Flyabout (discussed in more detail below) that brought $594,000, followed by a 1931 Pierce-Arrow Model 41 Convertible Victoria that realized $418,000 (all stated sale prices include a buyer's premium). Collectively, 116 (or 89.9 percent of) vehicular lots sold for $10,287,550. Add to that the $310,514 take from the sale of all 86 automobilia lots and RM Sotheby's grand total was $10,598,064. For a complete list of results, and an up-to-date RM Sotheby's event calendar, visit rmsothebys.com.

### 1914 THOMAS MODEL K-6-90 FLYABOUT

**Reserve:** Undisclosed **Avg. Market Range:** N/A
**Selling Price:** $594,000

By August 1912 the once-venerable Thomas was in receivership. Four years prior, it released the Model K-6-70 built on a 140-inch-wheelbase chassis with a 70-hp, 784-cu.in. six-cylinder. Optional, though never truly marketed as such, was an 88-hp version that spurred the K-6-90 moniker. This version of the K-6 chassis was supplied to commercial truck manufacturers after August 1912; this one was completed as a firetruck. Once part of the Harrah Collection, it was restored with Flyabout coachwork in the 1980s by another owner. Only 10 K-6-70/90 chassis are known to exist. It showed some wear on the older restoration; still, it sold well.

### 1924 NAPIER T75

**Reserve:** Undisclosed **Avg. Market Range:** N/A
**Selling Price:** $52,250

Napier is a name that's primarily known by well-versed enthusiasts. The British marque built the first commercially viable six-cylinder in 1904 that—when enlarged to 15-litre form—became a hit among racers. Napier engines were known for setting land speed records after World War I. The cars are rarely seen today, as only 120 single-model T75s were built from 1919-'24. They cost as much as a Rolls-Royce Silver Ghost, including this '21. It was found in South Africa where it had been used in hot air balloon recovery before it was purchased and restored with its current four-seat speedster coachwork painted British Racing Green. The low estimate for this rarity was set at $50,000.

### 1928 LA SALLE SERIES 303

**Reserve:** None **Avg. Market Range:**
**Selling Price:** $49,500 $55,000 - $75,500

A lot of effort went into conveying La Salle's companion make history within the auction catalog, as well as its design by a then up-and-coming Harley Earl. There were virtually no details pertaining to the past of this particular 1928 dual-cowl Sport Phaeton. It's certainly an elegant—and comparatively affordable when new—car, and the model/body style has been recognized as a "Full Classic" by the CCCA. It had also been restored at some point, during which time it was finished in period two-tone blue over black fenders, complemented by a blue leather interior. The presale estimate was $40,000-$60,000. Not bad for a Full Classic in driver condition.

**LEGEND**

**Reserve:** Minimum price owner will accept
**Selling Price:** What the vehicle sold for (including the buyer's premium)
**Average Market Range:** Values coincide with current market trends for vehicles rated from condition #2- to #1, respectively

BONHAMS

# Bonhams Bunch

**A SLEW OF PRE-WAR CARS, PRE-WORLD WAR I THAT IS,** changed hands at Bonhams' The Golden Age of Motoring auction in London last November. Among the consignments, more than 20 lots—ranging from an 1897 Daimler to a 1915 Lanchester Sporting Forty Torpedo Tourer—were sold. A nice example was this 1907 Stanley Model EX Steam Runabout with a known history from new, including the one-family ownership from 1925 to 2012. It particularly caught our eye as it underwent a restoration in *Hemmings'* current base of operations of Bennington, Vermont, in the mid-1950s. After its many decades around the country, it competed in the Stanley class at the Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance in 1997. The brass-era beauty had undergone some other significant restorations with a new boiler, burner pan, and all woodwork being preserved. It made its way across the pond in 2012 and sold last month for $168,900. Full results from The Golden Age of Motoring auction are available at bonhams.com.

RM SOTHEBY'S

# Amelia Island Auction Taking Shape

**CONSIGNMENTS ARE BEING ACCEPTED FOR RM SOTHEBY'S** annual auction at the Amelia Island Concours d'Elegance. Last year's sale realized a little more than $46.6 million in total sales with a sell-through of 89 percent; 11 cars changed hands with their final bids eclipsing the $1 million threshold. One of 2023's lots includes a 1949 Packard Custom Eight Convertible Victoria (pictured) that will sell without reserve. Early listings also include some European flair such as a 1968 Dino 206GT and 1934 Tatra T77. The auction will take place March 3, with free admission for the public to preview on March 2. Visit rmsothebys.com for the latest docket.

# MARCH

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# Pickups Prominent at Gone Farmin' Auction

MECUM

**TRACTORS, FARM EQUIPMENT, VINTAGE TOOLS, AND A VARIETY OF** pickups cross the block every autumn at Mecum's Gone Farmin' Fall Premier auction. This year, nearly 100 trucks and trailers were a part of the proceedings including this 1940 International D2H ¾-ton pickup. It's been a resident of the heartland, spending the last four decades with the same Sooner-state owner. Finished in proper green with black fenders, it featured the rare H-code option that included 32-leaf rear springs and heavy-duty steel wheels. It was powered by the original inline-six engine mated to the optional four-speed manual transmission. Other options included a crank out "V" windshield, cab heater, chrome bumper, and interior and exterior sun visors. The old workhorse still had the original bed and tailgate. It was ready to work for its new owner at $22,500.

Another old pickup to sell was a 1932 Ford Model B, finished in gray with black fenders and black interior. Its powerplant was a 201-cu.in. four-cylinder engine paired with a three-speed manual transmission. Other points of interest included a single wiper, sun visor, and a passenger-side-mounted spare. Solid inside and out, including a restored bed, the no-frills Model B sold for $31,900. See all the trucks that sold at the Gone Farmin' Auction at mecum.com.

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# HEMMINGS AUCTIONS

BY MARK J. McCOURT
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**HEMMINGS AUCTIONS IS OUR LIVE, ONLINE AUCTION SITE STAFFED BY** customer service professionals ready to help bidders and sellers with any questions. A wide variety of classic and specialty vehicles from all eras are up for bid. Auctions run for two weeks, and qualified bidders place their bids electronically. Once a vehicle is accepted into the auction, the seller pays only a $99.95 listing fee. The winning bidder is responsible for a 5-percent fee on all completed auctions. The following are examples of auctions that transpired during the month leading up to press time. If you have questions, comments, or suggestions, email Director of Auction Operations Terry Shea: terryshea@hemmings.com.

## 1967 FORD MUSTANG

**Reserve:** $41,500
**Selling Price:** $76,650
**Recent Market Range:** N/A

This Mustang Sports Sprint convertible, one of circa 8,500 built with the eponymous option package, was a fully documented, concours-winning car restored to an impressively high standard. It turned heads with its near-flawless Frost Turquoise paint over Aqua/Teal interior and white roof color scheme; it looked very fresh inside, out, and underneath. The 200-cu.in. inline-six engine was highly detailed and mated to a three-speed automatic, rather than the three-speed manual it was built with; that original gearbox went with the car. A video and more than 100 photos showed this Ford in its best light, and after an exciting 45 bids and 15 time extensions, it nearly doubled its reserve.

## 1964 ROLLS-ROYCE SILVER CLOUD III

**Reserve:** $75,000
**Selling Price:** $85,575*
**Recent Market Range:** $82,110-$105,220

Nearly 20,000 views showed this stately Rolls-Royce had genuine star power, and its ultimate sale as a Make Offer listing was comfortably within its range of market values. What made this Silver Cloud III so appealing? Its black paint was said to be free from damage, and the burgundy leather upholstery—renewed at some point—had just minor creasing. The believed-original wood trim inside showed a bit of fading, but the factory A/C and heat worked, and a modern stereo was in the dash. The original twin-carbureted V-8, whose indicated 22,546 miles were thought to be accurate, sent its power through a new automatic gearbox; the chassis looked clean, and its components were said to work fine.

## 1963 LINCOLN CONTINENTAL

**Reserve:** $85,000
**Selling Price:** $84,000*
**Recent Market Range:** N/A

The days of being able to purchase a nice Sixties Continental convertible sedan for a song are long finished, this never-rusted, three-owner 1963 example proved. It was said to retain its original Riviera Turquoise paint and matching leather interior, and its 320-hp, 430-cu.in. V-8 and three-speed automatic were claimed to have been factory-installed and covered just over 63,000 miles from new. The folding convertible top's mechanism was restored and was noted to function as it should, while the upholstery exhibited minor, reasonable wear considering its age. The chassis looked clean and radial tires appeared to be nearly new. This Lincoln very nearly hit its reserve as a Make Offer sale.

### LEGEND

**Reserve:** Minimum price owner will accept
**Selling Price*:** What the vehicle sold for, inclusive of buyer's 5-percent fee
(*sold as a Make Offer listing following the live auction)

**Recent Market Range:** The low-to-high value range for the vehicle based on published results of similar vehicles sold at auction over the previous 18 months

## 1957 CHEVROLET BEL AIR

**Reserve:** $46,000
**Selling Price:** $47,250*
**Recent Market Range:**
$42,100-$58,900

Perhaps the most iconic Tri-Five Chevy is the 1957 Bel Air Sport Coupe, and this restored, circa 90,000-mile example was a gem, coming out of 61 years of single ownership. The hardtop was obviously greatly loved, having been treated to a restoration around the turn of this century and reportedly never having rusted. Its cosmetics appeared very nice, both outside and in, with no reported blemishes in the Imperial Ivory paint, correct replacement silver/black upholstery, and full functionality of the original heater and AM radio. The "power pack" four-barrel 283 V-8 was a good pairing with the Powerglide, shown to operate well in a video. Its next owner was found via a Make Offer listing.

## 1964 GMC 2500

**Reserve:** $8,500
**Selling Price:** $19,425
**Recent Market Range:** $8,000-$14,200

This one-ton dually flatbed was treated to a NAPCO 4x4 conversion when new, subsequently working for a living as a fire truck and, later, as a brush truck used by a volunteer fire department. It was being sold sans equipment as a fundraiser for the firefighters and justifiably generated a lot of interest and 26 bids. The 2500's low-mileage 305 V-6 and four-speed manual transmission both operated without trouble, while the undercarriage looked clean and the original wheels mounted bias-ply tires. Minor fender rust was divulged, and paint was called "pretty good;" the spartan interior was free from damage, save for worn paint on the steering wheel. The GMC more than doubled its reserve.

## 1991 NISSAN FIGARO

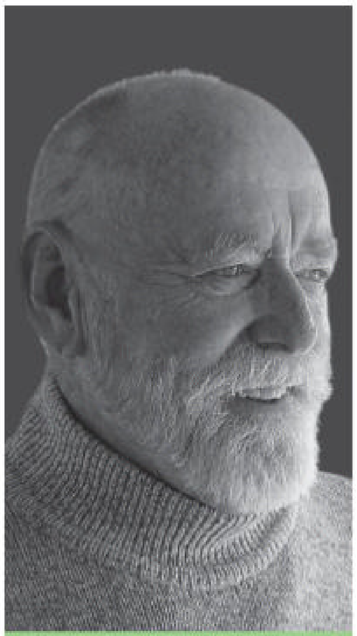
**Reserve:** $18,250
**Selling Price:** $19,425
**Recent Market Range:** $15,110-$22,350

Nissan's low-production, retro-tinged "Pike" cars shook up the Japanese car industry, and survivors are starting to appear on our shores. This right-hand-drive Figaro was imported from Britain, where it spent time and enjoyed a specialist restoration that left it looking very attractive with shiny custom-color paint over solid replacement sheetmetal, a good folding top, and re-dyed carpets; a bit of leather cracking atop the rear seatback was noted. The turbocharged 75-hp engine and 3-speed automatic promised smooth, trouble-free operation, like the replaced power steering rack. The seller answered numerous bidder inquiries and, after nine bids, the charming convertible found a new home.

## Advertisers in this issue

ADVANCED PLATING....................................37
BIRD NEST....................................45
BOB'S SPEEDOMETER....................................35
CLASS-TECH....................................37
COKER TIRE....................................1
COLONEL CRAWFORD
ATHLETIC BOOSTER CLUB....................................67
CUSTOM AUTOSOUND MFG....................................29
D&D CLASSIC AUTO RESTORATION..........47
GOVMINT.COM....................................9
THE GREAT RACE....................................5
GULLWING MOTOR CARS INC....................................
....................................INSIDE FRONT COVER
THE HAMILTON COLLECTION....................11
HILL'S CLASSIC CARS....................................69
HYDRO-E-LECTRIC....................................47
JC TAYLOR AUTO INSURANCE....................23
JOURNEY HEATH & LIFESTYLE....................13
KEYSTONE REGION CHAPTER....................67
NATIONAL PARTS DEPOT......... BACK COVER
ORIGINAL PARTS GROUP....................................39
ROBERTS MOTOR PARTS....................................35
RPM FOUNDATION....................................3
SMS AUTO FABRICS....................................47
STEELE RUBBER PRODUCTS....................45
SUMMIT RACING EQUIPMENT....................7
UNIVERSAL VINTAGE TIRE....................................4
V8S FOR VOCATIONS PROGRAM...............37
WALDRON'S EXHAUST....................................45

jimrichardson

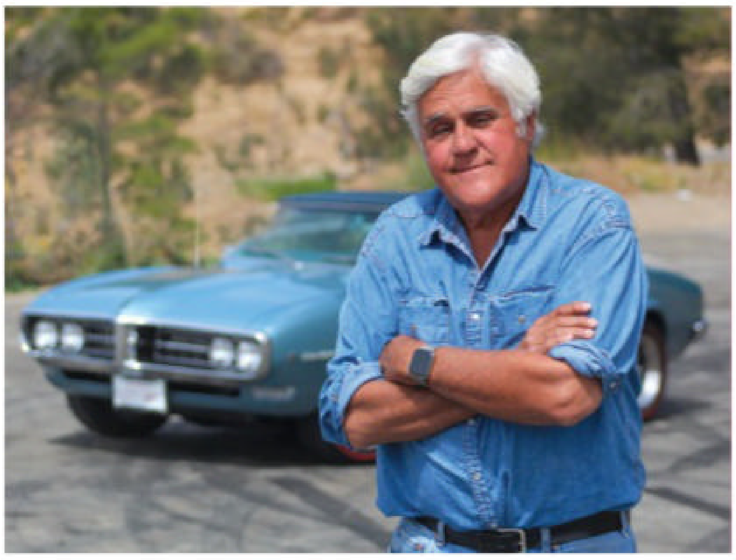


> It finally took someone with the intelligence, chutzpah, and charisma of Jay Leno to get things changed.

# He's One of Us

The first time I met Jay Leno was when Robert Escalante, of Custom Auto Service, needed to deliver Jay's 1956 Packard Caribbean to him up in Burbank, California. Robert asked if I could drive a backup car—a 146-inch wheelbase 1947 Packard Custom Eight—so he could get home. I was delighted. I had been a fan of Leno's *Tonight Show* for years; more importantly, I knew he was a car guy as well.

While we were cruising up the Hollywood freeway, I wondered what Jay would be like in person. I mean what he would really be like. Having done a little television myself with the how-to segments on Dennis Gage's *My Classic Car*, I found out that viewers often felt they knew you based on your presentation on screen. Of course, they are only seeing you duded up, scripted, and choreographed.



Viewers never see you after inadvertently draining an old Powerglide transmission onto your shirt, or when you dropped that wingnut down the carburetor of a running engine. And they don't realize that all of your thinking and proclivities may not be harmonious with theirs. In fact, they don't know if you are even civil when not in front of a camera.

When we arrived at Leno's Burbank facility, we strolled into a huge aircraft hangar that was car-guy heaven. Everywhere you looked were one-off classics, race cars, and motorcycles. Acres of them. We finally spotted Jay, who was elbow-deep in an air-cooled Franklin. He said, "Hi, I'm Jay Leno"—which gave us a chuckle—and then washed his hands, went over to a fridge to get out some cans of pop, and tossed them to my son and me. "You guys go ahead and have a look around while Robert and I conduct business," he said. My son and I were left to wander goggle-eyed through his collection, like babes in Toyland.

When Jay and Robert concluded their business, Jay came out and graciously took us on a brief tour and talked to us as if he were just another hobbyist showing off his collection. He treated us like pals. Later, I ran into him at car shows and Packard swap meets, rummaging through old, greasy parts like any commoner, and he was just as friendly and funny as you would imagine him to be.

The reason I am mentioning all of this is because he recently suffered some major burns while working on an antique White steam car, and I can only imagine what that was like. All of us who are hands-on classic car buffs have at some point or another been burned, boiled, and bashed in our endeavors to keep our classics on the road, and we know full well that it goes with the territory, no matter how careful you are.

I thought about sending Jay an email or letter telling him how much I appreciate all he has done for the old car hobby, and how many honking, snorting laughs I have had watching him on television, not to mention that he has always been a joy to talk to in person, and a genuine gentleman to deal with. But he has no doubt received many thousands of those, and they are still clogging his mailbox as I write.

Jay was instrumental in making sure that California's strict air pollution testing laws gave consideration to the classic car hobby, and exempted cars built before 1972 from the stringent requirements mandated for newer cars. Before his efforts on our behalf, I remember taking in my 1957 Chevrolet and paying $50 for a smog check knowing it would fail, and knowing that the state would not do anything about it because poor people couldn't pay to have their cars comply anyway.

It was nothing short of absurd. I once asked over the phone if I could just forgo the appointment and the test, humbly acknowledging that my car would not pass, and send them the $50, but no, that would not do. It finally took someone with the intelligence, chutzpah, and charisma of Jay Leno to get things changed.

Jay, I see that you are up and around, and have even scheduled an appearance in the near future. Good going. And please keep those car shows coming. By the way, you once said that you can always tell the steam car guys because they have no eyebrows—all I can say is, I hope yours reappear before you have to go on stage. Maybe Mavis can help with her makeup kit.

Otherwise, give me a call. I think I have a rattle can of black primer, and I can cut a stencil using a photograph of you to guide me, and we can shoot new ones on for you. After all, we car buffs have to stick together. I know you would do the same for me.

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